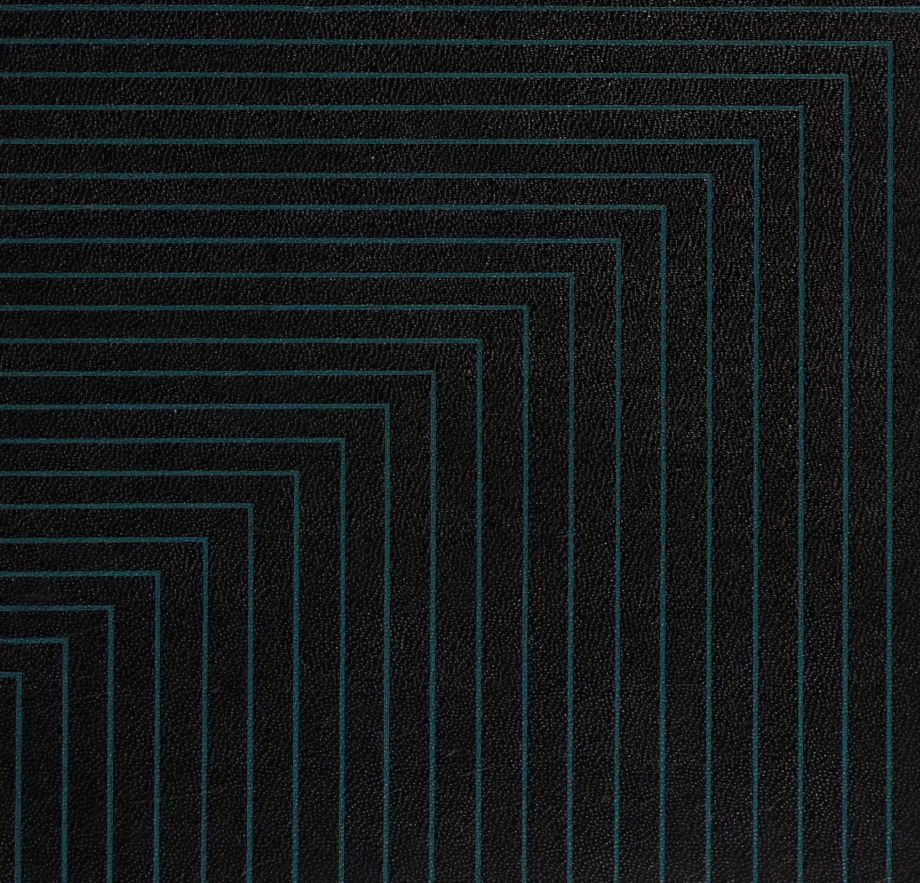


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
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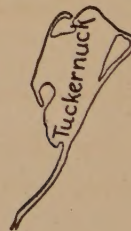
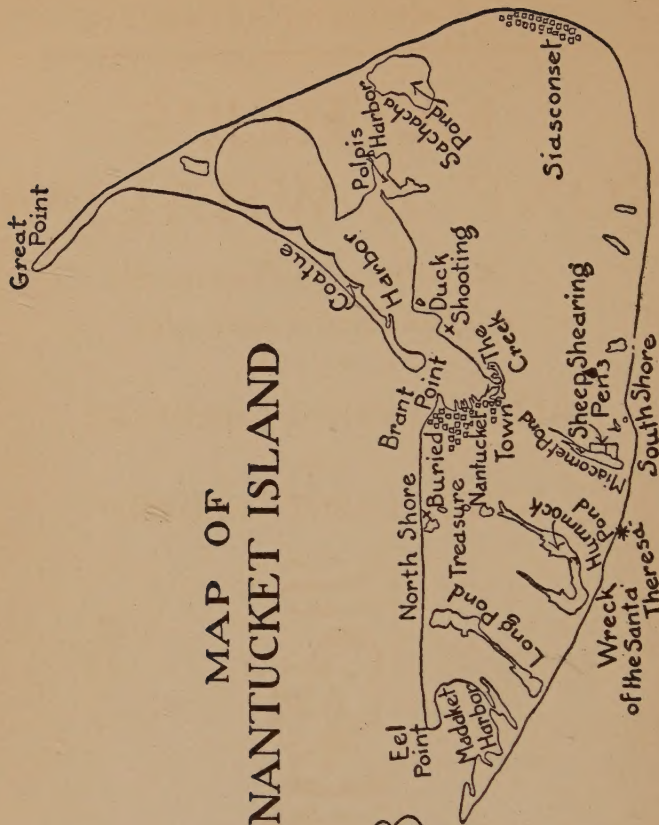
FATHER'S GONE
A-WHALING

MAP OF NANTUCKET ISLAND

Muskeget



Tuckernuck

YOUNG MODERNS BOOKSHELF

FATHER'S GONE A-WHALING

*Adventures in Nantucket
a Hundred Years Ago*

BY

ALICE CUSHING GARDINER

AND

NANCY CABOT OSBORNE



THE SUN DIAL PRESS, INC.

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DEDICATED
TO THOSE
NANTUCKET PEOPLE
WHOSE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES
HAVE MADE THIS BOOK

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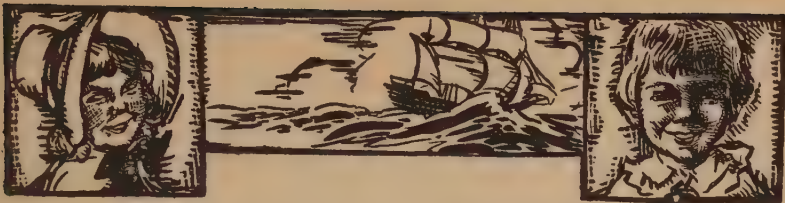
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CHAPTER I

CAPTAIN MACY GOES TO SEA

I AM going down to the counting house to sign the ship's papers, Peter," said Captain Macy; "would you like to come with me?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, Father. I'll get my cap!"

"Jonathan, do you think that is wise?" asked Mrs. Macy, looking up from her knitting.

"I shall not go on board, only as far as the counting house," replied Captain Macy, as he opened the front door.

"Oh, Father," cried little Mary, "does your ship sail to-morrow?"

"If all goes well, Mary. Come, Peter, are you ready?"

The door closed behind them. Mrs. Macy sighed; she was sad, for her husband had been at home only six weeks from his last voyage on the *Empress*; also, she was worried for fear that Peter would get a taste for the sea and wish to

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become a whaling captain like his father. In those days, a hundred years ago, many vessels sailed from Nantucket after whales and were gone for long voyages, lasting two or three years. Mrs. Macy hoped to keep Peter at home as long as possible, and perhaps to have him always live on shore. But Peter did not feel that way at all; he was constantly planning what he should do when he went to sea, and he hoped that it would not be much longer before his parents would allow him to go. As he walked along with his father, he was silent, trying to get up his courage to ask how soon he could go to sea.

At the counting house, Peter stood very quiet beside the tall desk while a clerk on a high stool scratched away with a quill pen as he asked Captain Macy questions. Peter looked at the colored pictures of ships, and the yellow maps that hung on the wall.

He watched with interest a swarthy Indian who swaggered in and asked in a guttural voice for the papers of the *Empress*.

The clerk pushed a paper across the table: "Here, my man," and continued talking to Captain Macy.

The Indian held the document upside down



Peter saw that the Indian could not read

and scanned it closely. Peter saw that he could not read.

"Where I write?"

The clerk turned back to him, twisted the paper right side up, and, for the first time, looked the Indian over.

"What are you shipping as, a harpooner?"

"I'se the best harpooner——"

"That'll do," broke in the clerk; "sign here"—and he placed his finger halfway down the sheet.

The Indian took the pen and then paused: "What lay?"*

"A ninetieth," snapped the clerk. "What are you waiting for? Can't you write?"

"I make my mark," stated the Indian, and he proceeded to make a large black cross where the clerk had indicated. The clerk wrote his name for him below the cross.

"There you are, all ship-shape. Get aboard to-morrow morning before eight bells."

The Indian stalked out and Captain Macy finished his business. As Peter walked home beside his father he decided that this was his last chance to speak to him.

*Lay: a share of the profits of the voyage.

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"Father, how soon can I go to sea?"

His father smiled down at him.

"Let's see, how old are you?"

"I'm nine."

"You will have to wait four or five years."

Peter's eyes filled with tears. Captain Macy continued:

"You must stay with your mother, now, while I'm away."

"But Grandfather's with her," Peter began. His father cut him short.

"No arguing, now. When you are older, perhaps you will not wish to go to sea. I want you to work hard at school and learn all the ciphering and geography you can; you must also learn to write a fine clear hand. Will you remember this?"

"Yes, sir," said Peter sadly; then, in spite of his father's words, he tried again: "Ben Pitman is going to sea next year, and he is only ten now."

"Peter, I am surprised at you," said his father. "Let us talk no more of this. Your mother would be very unhappy if she should hear you."

"Yes, sir."

"And now, here is sixpence. Go over to Eliza Riddell's shop and buy me three packages

of large needles. I will meet you at the house."

Peter went on the errand with a sad heart, for he knew there was no more to say about going to sea. He purchased the needles and caught up with his father as he was turning into Orange Street.

"Here they are, sir."

"Thank you." Captain Macy put them into his pocket. "I always take some on a voyage, for, if we go to the Pacific, we can buy from the natives with needles instead of money."

At that moment they reached their gate. The Macys' house stood on Orange Street, overlooking the wharves and the harbor. A straight path with an edging of box led to the front door. The house had gray shingles, and on the top of the roof there was a platform with a railing round it which was called the "walk." Through the middle of the walk rose the big chimney with its six flues.

Captain Macy's last day in Nantucket was always a busy one. He spent most of the time on the *Empress*, which was anchored off the bar, seeing to the stowing away of the last of the great casks filled with provisions for the voyage; he expected to bring them home full of whale

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oil. At home, Mrs. Macy sat in the kitchen, knitting fast in an attempt to finish an extra pair of socks for her husband, while the little maid Judith darted about preparing the Captain's last dinner, under Mrs. Macy's watchful eye. Grandfather was in the hall, putting the newly filled bottles into the medicine chest which Captain Macy was to take to sea. Many knocks came at the door: friends coming to say good-bye, and people bringing letters for Captain Macy to take to sea, on the chance that the *Empress* might meet the ships to which they were addressed.

The next day, Peter, with his mother and Mary, walked out on the road that led along the sandy cliff, and watched the *Empress* bear away to the northeast. Every white sail was filled, and they saw her grow smaller and smaller until she rounded Great Point and was gone. Then they went home, and the house was very quiet.

Two days after the *Empress* had gone, there was a heavy storm. As Peter lay in bed in his tiny room up under the eaves, and felt the house shake, he hoped that his father's ship had sailed

already far away from Nantucket weather, for he knew that in a gale even the largest ships were tossed about like toys.

Usually, he was happy during a storm, for he would snuggle down in bed and listen to the rain beating on the shingles only a few feet above his head. He would make believe that he was a hunter out in a tent, with a gun by his side and a knife in his belt, and that wild animals were prowling about. When he heard the surf booming on the South Shore, he would pretend that he was on a little island in the Southern seas, where the surf never ceased and the waving palm trees were always green.

But that night he had no pleasure in his fancies, for he could not forget his father. Instead of being proud of having a room to himself, he would have given it up for the comfort of sleeping with a brother, as his cousins and friends did. Even the cheerful eye of the Brant Point Light was hidden from him by the storm.

From four o'clock on, he lay awake, hoping that the wind would drop; but it kept on, shaking the house and dashing the heavy rain against the roof. At last, his little window began to

8 FATHER'S GONE A-WHALING

turn from black to gray, and he knew that morning was coming. Although the rain had stopped, the wind blew harder than ever.

Suddenly, above the sound of the wind, came a loud knocking at the street door, and a man's voice calling, "Captain Howland! Captain Howland!" Then Peter heard the front door open; he jumped out of bed and opened his own door a crack. At the foot of the stairs stood Grandfather with a candle in his hand, and his bare feet sticking out below his nightgown in a way that would have made Peter laugh at any other time. A man with a lantern was talking to him in great excitement; he turned to go, but as he unfastened the latch, the wind blew the door out of his hands and banged it against the wall. He ran out, trying to pull the door shut after him, but Grandfather had to push it from the inside, too, the wind was so strong.

As soon as the door was closed, Grandfather hurried back to his room. Then Mother appeared in her red quilted wrapper and white frilled cap; she ran downstairs with a candle in her hand and knocked on Grandfather's door. The wind was so loud that Peter could not hear what they said to each other, although they were

shouting, Grandfather in his room and Mother in the hall, but he caught the words "tide" and "wreck." Peter began to shiver with fright, but he dared not go down, so he stayed peering through the crack of his door.

Then Mother went into the pantry, and a few minutes afterward, Grandfather came out of his room dressed in his short blue jacket and his stout boots, his woolen cap pulled over his ears, and a gray muffler wound round his neck. Into the hall came Mother again and put a package into Grandfather's pocket. Peter could stand it no longer; he threw open his door and rushed downstairs.

"Oh, Grandfather, take me!"

"Why, what are you doing out of bed?" exclaimed his mother. "You'll catch your death of cold!"

"Is there a wreck? Where is it? What ship is it?" Peter was breathless.

"It's off to the westward, and I'm going to help; you must stay at home with your mother," Grandfather replied, and was gone.

"What ship is it, Mother?" asked Peter again.

His mother did not answer—she looked very white. Peter grew more frightened.

"Mother, do you know what ship it is? Could it be the *Empress*?"

"No," said his mother. "We are not afraid of that, for the vessel is a brig. But there are other ships besides your father's. Oh, Peter, you are only a little boy, but I may as well tell you: they fear it may be the *Esther Wells*."

"But, Mother, it couldn't be—she sailed last Friday—she wouldn't be out to the westward!"

"She ought not to be," said his mother, "but she is a brig, you know. We can do nothing but pray."

The *Esther Wells* was not owned in Nantucket, but she had just been fitted out there and her captain was a good friend of Grandfather's. He had often had supper with them during the last few weeks.

Just then the hall clock struck six.

"I can get dressed now, can't I, Mother?"

"Yes, you may get dressed now."

"And then couldn't we go up on the walk?"—he hesitated—"or out?"

"We'll see."

By the time Peter had hurried into his clothes, it was light. When he got downstairs again, his porridge was ready for him. He tried to

gobble it, but it was too hot, and his mother was dressed by the time he had finished it. She put on her long blue cloak and pulled the hood over her head, then wrapped Peter in a shawl ("just like a girl," he thought), and together they went upstairs and up the ladder, out on to the walk.

It was blowing terribly. He clung to his mother's hand, and together they ran to the lee of the chimney. To the eastward, the harbor was white with breaking water, and the spray was dashing up on the wharves. To the south and west, the commons were gray. It was three miles to the nearest place on the South Shore, too far away to see the surf, but they knew that the vessel was somewhere on the beach, and they looked and looked. Peter thought he could see masts rising above the edge of the bluff that kept the shore hidden from him; surely there were people going across the commons in that direction!

"Oh, Mother!" he cried, "I'm sure the wreck is off Miacomet. Couldn't we go there?"

His mother was silent. He went on:

"Grandfather didn't take Gibraltar, did he? I know I could harness him."

Gibraltar was an old white horse, very large and heavy, that Grandfather kept in a barn near the bottom of Orange Street.

His mother still hesitated, and he went on:

"Oh, Mother, I'm almost ten years old!"

"But I think your father would not want you to see such a dreadful sight."

"It may not be dreadful! Perhaps they have got all the men off!"

His mother gazed in silence; then she said:

"I think that if we had your grandfather's spyglass, we could tell where it was."

Peter went down the ladder as fast as he could and brought back the spyglass. His mother rested it on the railing, kneeled, and looked toward Miacomet.

"Oh, Mother, is it, is it?"

"Yes, you are right."

She held the glass steady for him. Yes, there were the two masts—it looked as if they were rising right out of the shore. He could not see the hull of the vessel because the dunes at the edge of the beach were too high. He turned to his mother.

"Oh, Mother, we must go!"



She held the glass steady for him

"Very well," said his mother, and down the ladder they went.

Fortunately, Mary was still asleep, and Judith was there to take care of her.

"Shall we take Gibraltar, Mother?"

"Let us do so."

They turned down the street to the stable, the wind shrieking around them. It was still early, and they met no one. Gibraltar looked at them calmly. It was hard work harnessing without Grandfather, but together they managed it.

"We must take Gibraltar's heavy blanket," said Mother, "for he might get cold waiting in the wind."

At last they were off. Mother drove and Peter sat close to her with Gibraltar's blanket round them both. The wind was behind them, but even so, the hard gusts took their breath away. It seemed as if Gibraltar had never moved so slowly. There were two men hurrying over the commons ahead of them, and Gibraltar did not gain on them at all.

The roar of the surf grew louder, and soon they could plainly see the masts and crosstrees of the vessel, although the spray made a heavy

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mist. At the sand Gibraltar stopped, and they put the robe over him and left him, for, like many other Island horses, he stood without being hitched. Then they hurried to the edge of the bluff, where a number of people were standing. Mother stopped the first man they met:

"Is it the *Esther Wells*?"

The man shook his head.

"Is it one of our own?"

The man shook his head again:

"She's from foreign parts!" he shouted, to make himself heard above the storm.

"Where are the men?"

"I don't know."

By this time they were on the edge of the bluff, with the beach a little below them and the vessel looming up in the surf in front of them. The tide was running to the eastward, right into the wind, and the huge waves were pounding against the ship, and sometimes breaking wholly over her, for she lay broadside to the beach. The spray was so thick that they could hardly see the deck or lower rigging; but up in the shrouds, above the waves, they could make out the figures of the sailors, waiting for help from shore.

As they watched, suddenly, a young fellow

with a line around his waist ran down to the water's edge and waded into the foam. Could he be going to swim out to the vessel? Peter knew that it was not possible. The fellow staggered down into the wash of the surf and came back; in his arms was a spar that had a line tied to it—the spar had been sent out from the ship. Then Peter understood: with that line from the ship, in some way, Grandfather and the men with him were going to save the sailors.

The men on the beach seized the line and made it fast to a heavy piece of driftwood buried in the sand. It now ran from the ship to the shore, clear of the waves, but it was not strong enough to bear the weight of a man.

"What they need is a heavy cable and a coil of rigging," said the man next to Peter. Evidently the people on the beach thought so, too, for two of them turned and ran up the bank. As they went by, one shouted:

"We're going to town for rope!" Then he saw Gibraltar.

"Whose horse is that?"

"It's Grandfather's!" shouted Peter.

"Take him!" cried Mrs. Macy.

The men raced toward Gibraltar, and started

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him on the fastest journey he had ever made. Peter watched him galloping away until he was hidden by a rise in the ground. Then there was nothing to do but wait.

People kept coming from town, each new arrival asking the same questions. It was hard to talk, because of the wind, although, between the worst gusts, it was lessening. The clouds in the south looked lighter and thinner, and Peter heard a man say:

"The tide will turn soon."

"Will the surf go down then?" asked the woman next to him.

The man shook his head, and then there was silence. Up from the beach came Grandfather.

"Why, how did you two get here?" They told him.

"Well, don't get cold," said Grandfather. "Did you cover Gibraltar?"

They explained that Gibraltar had gone back to town. Grandfather smiled.

"We'll get the men off," he said; "she's a stout vessel—the *Santa Theresa*, from Matanzas. She won't go to pieces for a long time yet."

Just then a sallow little man came up to Grandfather.

"Captain Howland, what do you think her cargo is?"

Grandfather looked at him contemptuously.

"For shame, Lemuel Marvin! We're going to save the crew and the cargo as well, if the storm ceases, and no thanks to you, coming here to make what you can out of other people's misfortunes!"

Grandfather looked very stern, and the little man slunk away.

"And he's not the only one here," added Grandfather, "who is looking to his own profit."

Just then someone shouted, "Here they come!" Two men in a cart were dashing toward them—not with Gibraltar this time, but a little brown horse instead. Gibraltar had done his duty.

Everyone ran to the cart, and the crowd carried the coils of heavy rope down to the beach. The men on shore made both the new ropes fast to the end of the light line that already ran out to the vessel, and the sailors in the rigging hauled them out through the surf. Now there were two lines from the vessel to the shore, the heavy cable and a smaller line, parallel to it but twice as long.

As soon as this was done, two of the rescuers ran back to where a big white horse was standing hitched to a Nantucket cart. They quickly unbuckled the hames from his harness and carried them down to the beach. The hames were pieces of wood that fastened on each side of the horse's neck, over the collar; on each was a large metal ring for the shafts. The men put these hames side by side, after they unbuckled the leather straps which held them together, and ran the heavy cable through both rings. Then they tied the lighter rope to the hames so that they could pull them back and forth over the heavy cable. Finally, they tied a hanging rope seat below them, and everything was ready to bring the men ashore from the vessel.

The sailors in the rigging slowly pulled this odd seat through the surf and spray out to the vessel, and one of the crew climbed into it. The other sailors waved their arms and the men on shore began to pull. The *Santa Theresa* was rolling so much in the great waves that the heavy cable would first be taut, then slack. It was taut when the first sailor started and all went well for the first few feet; then a great wave hit the ship, she rolled toward the water, and the

poor sailor went out of sight in the foam. It was a dreadful moment, but the ship rolled back, the men on shore ran up the beach with the rope, the sailor came up out of the water and slid ashore over the taut cable.

All the people on the bank shouted, Peter with the rest. They wrapped the sailor in blankets and carried him up the bank. Peter wanted to run and see him, but his mother kept him by her, thinking that he would be in the way.

The second sailor neared the shore and, like the first, was helped by many hands. As the third started ashore, the mist grew lighter, and Peter was able to count nine men still on the vessel. The people on the beach began to talk more freely.

"Did they try to launch a boat?"

"Poor souls! Do you think they are all there?"

"Will they save the ship?"

"The wind'll go down as the tide turns."

Grandfather came over to Peter and his mother.

"Oh, Grandfather, will you save them all?"

"Unless something goes wrong."

"There comes another sailor!"

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"Have you spoken with them?" asked Mrs. Macy.

"They are too cold and exhausted to talk, and there's only one who speaks English, I believe. They will be carried to town as soon as they are all ashore."

Peter hardly listened to his grandfather, for he was watching the sailors as they came over the rope, one by one, dipping into the water, sliding forward, and at last landing safely on the beach.

"The captain will probably come last," said Grandfather, "and he will be the hardest, because there will be no one on the vessel to keep the rope from tangling."

They watched until only one man was left in the rigging.

"I'm going down to the beach," said Grandfather. "I'll be back after he gets ashore."

The captain left the vessel just as the others had, but halfway to the beach the rope snarled, and he was held there and plunged down into the waves whenever the vessel rolled toward shore. But he knew what to do, and he still had strength enough to use his knife—he hacked away the small rope that had tangled, and, when the next

great wave rolled the ship away from shore and made the cable taut, he slid to the beach like a boy coasting downhill.

The crowd cheered and Grandfather came back.

"Now you and Peter had better be getting home," he began, "I want to stay until we know what is going to happen to the vessel."

"Will she break up right away?" asked Peter.

"I hardly think so," answered Grandfather, "but the cargo is rum and molasses, and if she goes to pieces, the casks will be washing ashore and there will be a crowd here all day."

Mrs. Macy looked at her father with concern.

"Now, Father," she said, "I think you should come home with us and get some dry clothes and have a hot breakfast. You are wet through."

"Well, Captain Howland," said a hearty voice beside them, "you certainly have done fine work!"

They turned and found Peter's uncle, Samuel Chase. He continued:

"I was up with the toothache all night, and I didn't get to sleep till five o'clock, and so they never waked me up."

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"Oh, Uncle Sam'l!" cried Peter, "they got all the sailors off!"

"I know—it was splendid! Now you'd better all jump in my cart and let me take you home. I'm going to drive one of the sailors in, too, but there will be room for us all."

"Let us take care of the sailor at our house," said Mrs. Macy. "You have a large family, Sam'l, and we have more room than you."

"Well, we'll see," said Uncle Samuel. "Now all jump right in. You drive, Captain Howland, and Peter can sit in the cart."

Grandfather hesitated.

"You are very kind."

Uncle Samuel did not wait for him to say yes, but led the way to the place where his horse and cart were standing. Grandfather must have been cold and tired, for he made no more objections, but climbed in. The poor sailor, bundled in a blanket, was lifted in beside Uncle Samuel, in the back; Peter and his mother got up with Grandfather, and they turned toward town. Peter looked back at the wreck; the *Santa Theresa* was still withstanding the cruel waves—would the next morning find her broken in pieces on the beach?



CHAPTER II

BURIED TREASURE

THE shipwrecked sailor was an American named Joel Banks, a little man who had been roving about the West Indies for five years, and had shipped on the *Santa Theresa* in order to get back to the States.

He stayed at the Macys' house a week. After two days of good care, he felt well enough to get up, and, for the rest of his visit, he made himself very useful. He mended the picket fence; he whitewashed the shed; he even offered to clean the chimney, saying that he was no bigger than a chimney sweep, but Grandfather thought it would be too tiring for him.

He was clever at whittling, and carved a little ship for Peter out of apple wood. Peter liked

to sit beside him on the kitchen steps and watch him work and ask him questions about his life at sea.

"How old were you when you went to sea, Mr. Banks?"

"Oh, I was jest a little shaver like you."

"And did you ever go whaling?"

"No, I've been cruisin' up an' down the coast, an' mostly in the Caribbean Sea lately."

"I should think that would be wonderful—I don't see why you ever wanted to leave the West Indies," said Peter, thinking of coral islands and flying fish.

"Well, I'm a Maine man, an' I jest got tired o' them hot places—there's yellow fever an' people dyin' of it all round—then there's pirates—take it all in all, them waters is no place for an honest sailor man."

"Oh, did you ever see a real pirate?"

"Bless you, many's the time."

"What did they do?"

"Everythin' wicked, but they're not so bad as the old fellers a hundred years ago sech as Captain Kidd and Black Beard—they's never been any wickedness to compare with them."

"But what did your pirates do?"

"Don't call 'em my pirates—the dirty rascals! Wall, I'll tell you 'bout the time I got mixed up with them: I'd been lucky, up to a year ago, havin' al'ays escaped them, but one day we was lazyin' along on the way to San Juan. They wasn't much wind to speak on, an' we wasn't very fast in any weather. We took notice of a bigger schooner about three mile off, but didn't think anythin' about her till she came over our way. She was a dirty-lookin' craft, but that's nothin' to remark on in those yere parts. The mate got out his glass and looked for her name, and all on a sudden he began to swear. 'She's a pirate'! he yelled; 'put her hard over!'

"Slam we went about, and then there was a chase, but it warn't a very long one, for the old *Josephine* was slow, as I told yer, and the wind was light, and they gained on us from the start. But we got in near shore, an' the Cap'n said he knew the place like his own cabin, so we crep' round the reefs an' slid over the shoals, an' we could tell from the way Mr. Pirate acted that he didn't like it none too well. When they'd get near enough to us, they'd shout to us to sur-

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render an' they wouldn't harm us any, but they'd wave their wicked knives while they was sayin' it, so we didn't take no stock in that.

"Then the wind come up a bit, an' we got near an inlet the Cap'n knowed of. He said they was a bar acrost the mouth, an' at high water we could get over, but he didn't think the pirate'd dare follow us, for his boat drawed more water; an' if we was once inside an' they come a'ter us in the small boats, we'd have the advantage. It was near high water, so we made for the openin'; the old pirate was right at our heels, not more'n a quarter of a mile away, an' we was feelin' pretty good, for we'd made a good run of it, an' the Cap'n said, 'Grog all 'round, soon's we're safe,' when crack! we hit the reef an' keeled over to one side.

"I never see a madder man than that Cap'n. He was Spanish, but he could swear in lots o' other languages, an' he did, for there we was stuck, an' easy pickin's for Mr. Pirate."

"What did he do then?" exclaimed Peter.

"He jest came up into the wind an' drifted down to us with the tide. We had a cannon, an' we let him have it often's we could load it, but it didn't stop him, an' in a jiffy he was 'long-

side us. We all had knives, an' the Cap'n a brace o' pistols, an' we put up a good fight, but they was a lot o' them, an' it didn't last long. They left us up on deck, tied hand an' foot, bleedin', groanin', an' cursin', while they went below to get our stuff."

"Oh, Mr. Banks, were you badly hurt?"

"Nothin' to speak of: see that scar?" Mr. Banks rolled up his sleeve and displayed a long white scar on his forearm, "That was Mr. Pirate's knife. I lay there expectin' to bleed to death, an' I says to myself, 'Joey Banks, if you get out o' here alive, you go home to Maine to a Christian country.'

"Jest then the pirates came up from below—they hadn't found much, for we was travelin' in ballast, an' a madder lookin' crew I never hope to see. They was talkin' Spanish so fast I couldn't understand the half of it, but the main idee was to throw the whole of us overboard for revenge because they hadn't got nothin' for their trouble. By that time, I didn't care what happened: I was weak from losin' blood, and the sun was bakin' hot, an' the flies was crawlin' over me, but while they was disputin', one of the men they'd left on the pirate ship give a yell.

I opened my eyes jest in time to see them scramblin' over the side as fast as they could. In a jiffy, they were aboard their own ship, and from the noise, I judged they was tryin' to get away in a hurry—an' they did."

"Why did they do that?"

"I'll tell yer. Soon as we got ourselves untied, we found another vessel had hove in sight 'round the end o' the island. She was a good-lookin' craft, bigger than Mr. Pirate, an' she'd scared him off. So we was all right, an' while she chased the pirate for us, we got fixed up and warped the *Josephine* off the bar, and we wasn't so much the worse for bein' caught."

"Did the pirate get away?" Peter asked eagerly.

"I dunno," answered Mr. Banks; "they sailed 'round the end o' the island an' we never saw either o' them again."

Pirates were new to Peter, and he began to be worried.

"You know, Mr. Banks, my father is off on a whaling voyage. Now, I don't suppose pirates would *ever touch* a whale ship."

Peter wanted to be reassured.

"Well, your pa—beggin' his pardon, Cap'n

Macy—wouldn't be goin' about in those yere waters among the islands—an', too, a whale ship's pretty big for a pirate to tackle—an', too, all the treasures a whale ship has is what's been took off'n the whale, an' what would a pirate want o' that?"

"I see." Peter felt better. "He'd never touch a whaling vessel."

"Well, course, they's times when he needs food an' water an' he'll take 'em from any vessel that's slower an' smaller than he is. But what he's lookin' for is money an' treasure, or stuff that's easy to sell, stuff that'd bring him in good English gold."

"My!" said Peter, "and what would he do with all his money?"

"Oh, he'd spend it free and gamble—some on 'em save it: the old rascal Cap'n Kidd left an estate of a thousand English pounds, an' it went through an English court o' law—but few o' them can do that. If they manage to save anything, usually they bury it."

"Where would they bury it?"

"Oh, in a secret place on a wild stretch o' shore where no one but himself knows about it, an' mebbe one other man who'd help lug the big

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box, and like as not 'ud get a charge o' gunshot in his back arterwards!"

"Why, what for?" cried Peter.

"Then only the pirate'd know where the place was. They do say as Cap'n Kidd buried heaps o' treasure somewheres on this coast, Virginia, or Long Island."

"Did he come as far north as this?"

"Sartin he did."

"And is it still buried?"

"Must be—I never heard o' any one findin' it."

"How could any one find it?"

"Couldn't, onless they'd see the pirate put it there, or found a map tellin' where it was. You see, the old pirate'd draw a map o' the place and put a big black cross to show where the box was, an' he'd keep it in his chest, and some day he'd get killed in a fight, like Black Beard, or hung from the gallers, like Cap'n Kidd, and someone else'd find the paper. Then off he'd go, follerin' the directions, and he'd dig, and there'd be the treasure."

"My!" sighed Peter. "I'd like to find a paper like that! Did you ever see one, Mr. Banks?"

"Yes, I seed one oncet. I and another feller

bought one from an old cross-eyed sailor man. It had a skull and crossbones at the top, all regular, just like they al'ays have—an' the old sailor man made us swear on a Bible as we'd go halves with him if we found it. We had to pay him an English pound for the map—that made us think it was true."

"And did you go to find the treasure? Was it far?"

"It took us a day to get there. It was on a leetle island in Manzanillo Bay—my! it was the hottest place I ever see! We cruised 'round a bit until the beach where the treasure was buried was plain in front of us, an' there we lay, waitin' for the sun to set. When we went ashore, there was only a big red moon watchin' us. The paper said four paces no'-no'theast an' six paces sou'west from the big dead tree. I had a compass, an' we stepped it off right, an' then we dug, an' we dug, an' dug, an' dug."

"And what did you find?" Peter couldn't wait to hear about so much digging.

"We found nothin'—nothin' at all. Someone must ha' got there afore us, 'cos I knowed it was the right place."

"What a shame!" cried Peter. Then a won-

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derful idea came to him: "Do you suppose any pirate ever buried treasure on Nantucket?"

"Might have," said Joel Banks; "it's kinder out o' the way and pretty far north, but there's lots o' lonesome places 'round here, and they wouldn't get suspected in these parts."

"Oh, do you think so, Mr. Banks? But now, if you had found the chest, what would there have been in it?"

"Gold, rows o' gold—English gold or Spanish gold. I seed a piece o' Spanish money oncet that had the head of a Spanish king on it, who lived afore there was anybody on this island but Indians, an' the man as showed it to me said as it had come out o' a pirate's treasure chest. I dunno's that was so, but it was a pretty thing an' heavy, my! I wish I had a hundred of 'em."

"And would the chest be just chock full of gold?"

"Oh, maybe there'd be some jewels, earrings an' necklaces, that the pirates had stole from their captives. I never saw none of those."

"And there's no way to find buried treasure unless you have a map?"

"Have a map or jest dig 'round where you think it is—but that'd mean a lot o' diggin'."

He paused and held up the toy boat.

"Now, boy, here's your boat—your grand-sire'll rig her for you."

"Oh, thank you!" Peter was delighted. "I'll name her the *Joel Banks*."

"I'd finish her myself," continued Joel Banks, "if I didn't have to go to-morrow. You people have been mighty kind to me. I tell you, Joey Banks won't never forget Nantucket."

For a week after Joel Banks left Nantucket, Peter thought about pirates and buried treasure. He asked his grandfather whether treasure might be hidden on Nantucket, but Grandfather thought not. Nevertheless, ropes of diamonds and pearls, and large gold coins, danced before Peter's eyes as he went to sleep at night. He told his cousin Peleg Chase all that Joel Banks had said, one day while they were out on the North Shore, picking beach plums for their mothers. Peleg was just as interested in buried treasure as Peter, but he had never heard of any on Nantucket, or of any pirate ship off the familiar shores.

"But that's no sign there isn't any," argued Peter hopefully; "there's no real reason there shouldn't be treasure buried right here."

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Peleg was very practical.

"You couldn't dig up the whole island to find out," he said. "I wish we knew some pirates so's we could ask them about Captain Kidd and Black Beard, and where the treasure was supposed to be hidden."

"Goodness, I wouldn't dare ask a pirate anything," said Peter, "I'd rather find a map with secret directions on it."

The boys had been picking beach plums for more than an hour, and it was growing late, but their pails were not yet filled. Peter looked around.

"These are measly little berries here. Isn't that a big bush over in the hollow by the edge of the cliff?"

They trotted over and found a large bush of dark, well-ripened berries. Just below them lay the beach, but they turned their backs on it, and picked busily, for a fog was creeping toward them out of the east.

Suddenly they heard voices. Looking over the edge of the bank, they saw a skiff rowed by two men appear out of the fog and approach the beach. The men were swarthy and had red bandanna handkerchiefs around their necks.

They ran the boat up on to the beach and, jumping out, lifted from it a large box, which they put down on the sand.

"Who can they be?" whispered Peter. "What are they doing?"

"Look like Kanakas," answered Peleg.

Peter's mind jumped back to pirates.

"Do you think it's treasure? Let's watch 'em."

Both boys lay down in the beach grass and peered over the bank. The fog was thick by this time, but the men were just below them on the beach.

"Oh, look," whispered Peter.

The smaller of the two men ran back to the boat and, returning with a spade, began to dig with all his might in the soft sand above high-water mark. After a few minutes, he straightened up, breathing hard, and handed the spade to his companion, who went to work in his turn. Before long, they had a deep hole, into which they lowered the big box. They shoveled the sand in around it, flattened off the top of the mound, and vanished in the direction of the skiff, which was by this time entirely hidden in the fog. The boys could hear the grating of her

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bottom on the sand as she was pushed off, and the sound of the oars in the rowlocks growing fainter as she was rowed away.

"Did you see a gun?" asked Peter in a hoarse whisper.

"No, why?" asked Peleg.

"The big one might shoot the other one in the back after it was done, so's no one but himself would know where the treasure was hidden," answered Peter. "Listen!"

Both boys held their teeth together hard, to keep them from chattering, as they strained their ears for a shot, but none came.

"Well," said Peleg, at last, "shall we go down?"

"Yes, hurry, it's getting dark. But what if they come back?"

"We'll hear them and run!"

Peter knew they could not run very fast in the soft sand, but he slid down after Peleg as quietly as he could. The right place was not easy to find in the growing darkness, but when they came to a much trampled spot in the sand, they knew it must be over the box.

"Now, what'll we do?" asked Peter; "try to dig it up?"

"We can't dig it up without a spade," answered Peleg, "and we couldn't carry it if we did dig it up, and we couldn't open it without a hatchet. We'll have to leave it here——"

"And make a map," interrupted Peter, "so we can come back here and get it."

"With a spade and a hatchet——"

"The pirates will be off on a voyage——"

"That's it. What'll we make a map on?"

"Here's a big clam shell. I can scratch on it with a stone. Now what do we do?"

Peter knew well.

"You pace back to the bank—I'll pace to the water——"

So, for a moment, the boys separated, taking long steps in opposite directions, then racing back as each reached his mark.

"Mine was twelve," shouted Peter; "what was yours?"

"Ten—mark it down. Now what?"

"We ought to have a compass and an old dead tree."

"Well, we can't go home for a compass, and there aren't any dead trees this side of the Lily Pond—wouldn't the beach-plum bush do?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so—it's sort of dead—

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anyway, it might die this winter. Where is it?"

They hunted in the gloom for some minutes before they found the bush with their pails under it.

"Now, what direction is the box in?"

"I think it's no'theast——" but Peleg's voice sounded doubtful.

"But I think no'-no'theast sounds better, and when we come again we can bring a compass and it will be easy."

"I don't see why," said Peleg, but Peter did not explain. He was growing nervous, and every now and again he fancied he heard the sound of oars and voices.

"Don't you think we'd better go home?" he ventured. "Mother wanted me home by dark."

They started back, but it took them almost an hour to get to town. Mrs. Macy was displeased that Peter had been so careless about the time, but his pail full of beach plums helped his case. He did not say a word about the treasure, but hurried upstairs and tucked the clam shell into a private hiding place he had under the eaves.

The boys were not able to go back to the north shore until the next Saturday. They had secret

consultations every day, and decided to take Mr. Chase's spade and Peter's grandfather's hatchet, steal out of town a roundabout way, and dig up the treasure in broad daylight. They were not allowed to be out after dark, and Peter thought they would be safer from an attack by the pirates if they went when the sun was shining.

Saturday was a pleasant day, and clam shell in pocket, with Grandfather's hatchet concealed beneath his jacket, Peter met Peleg by the Quaker burying ground. Peleg had the spade draped with an old piece of sailcloth, but even so, it was evident that it was a spade. As soon as they were out of town, Peleg threw away the sailcloth and dragged the spade by the handle.

"I'm sorry I couldn't get Grandfather's compass," said Peter, when they were well on their way; "it's as heavy as a rock, and besides, he doesn't like to have me touch it."

"Never mind"—Peleg did not care about the compass—"we'll find it. Why, the sand there'll still be all trodden 'round."

But when they reached the beach, they found it was not so simple. A high tide during an easterly wind had washed the tumbled sand flat. They looked for the beach-plum bush, but in-

stead of one, as they remembered, they found two, not twenty yards apart, and "like as two peas," as Peleg remarked in disgust.

"What shall we do?" asked Peter. "We don't know which bush it was, and we don't even know where north is."

"My father can tell the points of the compass by his watch, when the sun's out," suggested Peleg.

"But we can't, and we haven't got any watch."

"Well, let's go down to the beach and dig all 'round—we might find it."

"But that's a great deal of work, and it would take all day, perhaps."

Peter looked at the clam shell.

"Let's pace from the bank, anyway; ten and twelve is twenty-two."

This did not help matters, for they paced twenty-eight from the water to the bank.

"Nothing's right," said Peleg disgustedly.

Peter pulled the clam shell out of his pocket again and consulted it, then he looked down at the beach. Suddenly he shouted:

"I know what's the matter—the tide's out! When we paced it before the tide was in!"

"Come on!" cried Peleg, already halfway down the bank, "let's try it!"

And they found that Peter was right, for, starting from the high-tide mark for that day, and from the foot of the bank, the boys met. They paced three times, each from a point east of the beach-plum bushes, and drew as straight a line as they could between the meeting points. At one end of the line they began to dig.

At first they worked fast, taking turns. It was Peleg's second turn when the spade struck something hard.

"Here it is!" and he threw out of the hole a great shovelful of sand—but with the sand came a piece of driftwood. He tossed it aside with disgust.

"I thought that was the chest. Never mind, we'll find it!"

But after twenty minutes they had reached the end of their line and no chest had appeared. They sat down to rest.

"What'll we do now?" Peleg was tired. "Do you suppose the pirates came back and got it?"

There was no answer to this question. Peter put his feet in the trough they had dug and

pushed them up and down till they were hidden in the damp sand. Then he gave his opinion:

"I think we ought to dig it wider and deeper."

"I suppose so. I wish we'd brought something to eat."

Peter felt in his pocket:

"Here's a piece of sugared flagroot."

They divided it, crunched it up, and felt better.

"Come on," said Peleg, "I'll begin."

"Wait!" exclaimed Peter, "there's something here under my foot!"

"Probably more driftwood—let me get at it!" Peleg swung his spade into the sand—it struck something hard; he brought up a spadeful of sand but no driftwood—the boys fell on their hands and knees and began to dig like little dogs; the sand flew all around them.

"It's here! It's the chest!"

And it was the chest. In a moment they had one corner free from sand. Peleg seized the hatchet; Peter stood back.

"Let me knock a hole in it!" Smash, crack! The wood was rotted and the splinters flew.

"Now I can get my hand in!"

"What do you feel?"

"Something hard—there's a lot of packing 'round it." Peleg tugged.

"No, it feels like a bottle—here it is."

And Peleg drew out a bottle, old and dark, with the label only a wisp of blurred paper.

"Let me try," and Peter put his hand in. More pulling and tugging, and out came another bottle.

"Do you suppose it's all bottles?"

"I don't see why a pirate'd bury a chest of bottles!"

They pulled out six more and stopped.

"It's all bottles." Peter was greatly cast down, but Peleg still hoped.

"Let's see what's in them."

He hit the neck of one of them with the hatchet, and a thin red liquid flowed out on to the sand. Peleg poured some on to his hand and tasted it. He made a face.

"It's just wine—an old box filled with bottles of wine. I don't believe those men were pirates at all."

"I don't either. Who wants old bottles of wine!" Peter pushed them away with his feet.

"Your grandfather might."

"I suppose so. I could take one home to him,

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and we could put these up under the beach-plum bush and fill the box up with sand. If he wants the rest, he can come and get them."

So they started home with bottle, spade, and hatchet. Although it was October, the noon-day sun was hot, and they felt tired and discouraged. The church clock struck twelve as Peter turned in at his gate. He walked 'round the corner of the house and found Grandfather chopping kindling wood.

"Well, Peter Macy, where have you been with my hatchet?" Grandfather sounded very cross. "I hunted everywhere for it until Mary remembered that she had seen you take it, and then I had to borrow one."

At this, Peter felt almost like crying, for he was so tired and hot and disappointed, and he knew that he should not have taken the hatchet; but he swallowed hard and began his story.

"Peleg and I went to get pirate treasure that we saw two men bury, and I needed the hatchet to open the chest."

"You did, did you?" Grandfather looked surprised. "Well, what treasure did you get?"

"Only this," Peter held out the bottle.

Grandfather took it and smelled of it.

"What's inside?"

"It's red, like wine. There's a whole box of bottles there, if you want to go and get them."

Grandfather went into the house and returned with a corkscrew. Out came the cork, and after smelling of the bottle's contents, he took a little sip.

"Why, that's good Madeira wine—it tastes like Old London Particular. Where did you say you found it?"

"On the North Shore—a whole box of it is buried there. We hid six bottles under a beach-plum bush; you can go and get it if you want to."

"Why, I'd be glad enough to have it, and I think your Uncle Sam'l would, too. You say half of it is Peleg's? But how did it come there?"

Peter told the rest of his story, now that he saw the wine was welcome.

"Well, I know where that comes from," said Grandfather. "Don't you remember the old *Cicero*? She was wrecked off Great Point just before Christmas, three—no, four years ago."

Peter screwed up his forehead.

"No, I don't believe I do."

"Well, you were only a little shaver then.

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Anyway, she drifted 'round and at last drove on Swile Island shoal. They got a good deal of the cargo off, but what they didn't would have been gone by now, I should think, what with the storms and people going out there after it. She had indigo and cotton from India, and some tin and ginger root, and I remember talk of wine; I understood that it was in hogsheads, but here it is in bottles!"

"I'm glad you like it, Grandfather," said Peter; "we didn't think it was any good."

"You feel pretty sorry about that treasure, don't you, Peter?" asked Grandfather kindly. Peter nodded.

"Now, don't fret," continued Grandfather. "People don't dig up treasure 'round these parts. You've come as near to it as any one could. We'll harness Gibraltar after dinner and go out there, and I'll be mighty glad to have those bottles in the back of my cupboard."



CHAPTER III

GRANDFATHER COMES HOME FROM PHILADELPHIA

WINTER that year broke up early, and in March, Grandfather went to Philadelphia on a visit. The children missed him very much, and so did their mother. She was busy with her spring cleaning and sewing, so that she was not able to look after them as much as usual. Of course, they were in school during the morning, but on Saturdays and in the afternoons, Peter had many chances to get into mischief.

The Saturday before Grandfather's return, Peter ran down street with Peleg, ready for anything that might turn up. The first sight that caught his attention was a cart, heaped high with codfish, standing in a yard.

"Oh, look, Peleg! Let's see them divide the catch!"

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"I'm tired of codfish—had some for breakfast—come on!"

They turned into State Street;* they came to the apothecary shop which was kept by a simple, kind old Quaker, Aaron Perry. His shop smelled of clove and peppermint drops; children could buy a bagful for sixpence.

"Let's go into Aaron's shop," suggested Peter, "and play a joke on him."

"We'd better look in the window and make sure there's no one there but Aaron."

They sauntered by the shop window, looking sidelong through the little square panes; the coast was clear.

"Come on," said Peleg, pushing open the door. "Good-morning, Aaron."

"Good-morning, boys; what can I do for thee this morning?"

"I'd like to buy a Spanish cigar," giggled Peter. Aaron looked at him over his spectacles.

"I hope thee is only speaking in fun, Peter."

Peter nudged Peleg, who cleared his throat.

"Ahem! I wonder if you have any Quaker hymn books in stock?"

*State Street, now Main Street.

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At this the boys burst into roars of laughter and ran out the door.

This was one of the favorite jokes of the Nantucket children, because the Quakers did not sing hymns.

They ran pell-mell down the sidewalk and turned the corner into Union Street.

"My, it's hot," said Peter, as they dropped into a walk.

Peleg fanned himself with his hat.

"It might as well be June. I tell you what, Peter, let's go swimming."

"Swimming in April!" exclaimed Peter.

"Why shouldn't we? We could go in right over at the creek, and nobody would ever find out."

"All right," replied Peter, "come on."

In five minutes they were slipping off their clothes; the tide was running in swiftly; the water looked delicious.

"Here goes!" cried Peter, and they both jumped in.

"Thunder, but it's cold!" Peleg gasped, making for the bank as fast as he could splash.

Peter scrambled out behind him; his teeth chattered as he pulled on his red flannel under-

shirt; Peleg was trying to rub himself down with his woolen stockings.

"Come on up to my house and we'll steal some cookies."

"All right," said Peter, "but hurry up; I'm cold standing 'round here."

"I'm all ready." Peleg buttoned his shirt as he hurried after Peter; the boys walked briskly, but Peter got no warmer; as they reached the Chase's gate, the town clock struck twelve.

"There's the clock, Peleg—I've got to go right home."

"Well, good-bye," called Peleg, running up the front steps. "See you this afternoon!"

Dinner was on the table when Peter walked in.

"Why, Peter Macy, where have you been?" His mother looked at him closely. "What have you been doing? Your lips are perfectly blue, and you're shivering. Have you got on your woolen undershirt?"

"Yes'm."

"Then what makes you so cold?"

Peter kept silent.

"Peter, answer me!"

"I guess I've got sort of a chill," he ventured.

"A chill! and how did you get a chill on a day like this? Why, Peter, your hair is all wet!"

"So it is," murmured Peter, feeling of his hair.

"You've never been in the water at this time of year!" cried Mrs. Macy.

Peter looked down at his plate.

"Peter!" said his mother.

"Well, yes, I did, just in and out again."

"Mercy on us," said his mother, "no wonder you have a chill! Don't sit there another moment! Go right upstairs to bed! I never heard of such behavior; you shall be severely punished for this, but now get right along into bed. I'll bring up a brick for your feet. Judith, please put a brick in the oven."

Peter dragged himself upstairs; he was cold and hungry and knew that he had been very naughty. He undressed and crept in between the blankets; Mrs. Macy's step sounded on the stairs, and she entered the room, carrying in one hand a brick wrapped in flannel, and in the other a large bottle, at the sight of which Peter's heart sank.

"Oh, Mother, do I have to take sulphur and molasses?"

"Certainly you must. It may prevent your

being seriously ill. Come, open your mouth!"

Peter held his nose, shut his eyes, and gulped down the horrid stuff.

"Ugh!"

"Now I am going to put this red flannel around your neck. Later on, you can have some gruel."

"Can't I have any dinner?"

"Not after the way you have behaved. Lie quietly and try to go to sleep."

Mrs. Macy pulled the patchwork quilt up to Peter's nose and left the room, closing the door behind her. Peter listened to her footsteps descending the stairs and felt very unhappy: his Saturday was entirely spoiled, for he knew that he would have to stay in bed all that day and probably the next. He was very sad to think of Grandfather coming home and finding that he had been so naughty.

On Monday, Peter was allowed to get up and go to school. When he got home, his mother met him at the door:

"Peter, they say the *Argos* is coming 'round Brant Point, so Grandfather may be home in time for dinner. Run up on the walk and see if she is in."

Peter climbed up through the scuttle and looked down, past the masts of the vessels at the docks, to the harbor. There was the *Argos*, just dropping anchor. It was a clear April day and the harbor was deep blue; the low hills on the eastern shore were shining in the sunlight; near at hand were the gray roofs and the chimneys of the neighbors' houses: and behind the town the open commons stretched away until they met the outer ocean.

He looked again at the *Argos*. The sailors were lowering a boat, but he could not tell whether his grandfather were there or not. So he went down through the scuttle, and brought back the spyglass. He could not hold it up the way Grandfather did, so he rested it on the railing, then peered through it and found the *Argos*. The very first person he saw on deck was his grandfather, carpet bag in hand, waiting to go ashore.

Peter was delighted. He hurried downstairs, careful to close the scuttle and leave the spyglass on its shelf, and found his mother and Mary in the kitchen.

"Oh, Mother, the *Argos* is in, and I saw Grandfather on the deck all ready to come

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ashore! I'm sure he'll be home in time for dinner!"

"Goody, goody!" cried Mary. "See, Peter, we're going to have chicken!"

Peter sniffed a delicious odor, for two fat fowl were sizzling as they turned slowly on an iron spit before the open fire. There was no stove, for stoves were not used in Nantucket a hundred years ago. The fireplace was as high as Peter's head, and so large that a whole sheep could be roasted in it at once.

Beside the fireplace hung the tinder horn, which was used to light the fire. Iron pots and kettles of different sizes stood nearby, and potatoes were boiling in a large black pot that hung over the flames.

Across the room from the fireplace was the dresser on which stood Mrs. Macy's best pewter mugs and platters, her plates of blue willow pattern china and a pink luster tea-set of which she was very proud.

Mary was supposed to be helping her mother set the table, but after every trip to the cupboard, she peeped out the window to see if Grandfather were not coming up the street.

"Mary, you must attend to what you are do-

ing," said Mother, as she found her balancing a blue plate on the window sill.

Mary hurried to the table.

"Oh, Mother, can't we use the tumblers that came from Bremen?"

These were the best tumblers, larger round than the everyday ones, but not taller. Mary loved them because each one had a pretty pattern in the lower half of the glass. They were kept on the top shelf of the cupboard.

"Yes, you may get them, Mary, but be very careful."

Mary got a wooden-seated chair and climbed up on it. But just as she reached for the first tumbler, she again peeped out of the window, and jumped down.

"Oh, Mother, there's Grandfather!"

The children ran to the front door, followed more slowly by their mother.

"Well, well, here we all are!" cried Grandfather. "This is a good welcome!"

He swung Mary off the floor, and gave her a hearty kiss.

"And dinner is all ready for you," said Peter. "I looked through the spyglass and saw you coming."

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"And I'm all ready for dinner," said Grandfather. "My, I'm glad to see you all again! I feel as if I'd been away on a real voyage."

"You've been away just four weeks tomorrow," Peter informed him. He had kept count of the days on a calendar he had made for himself.

"Come, children," said Mother. "Grandfather's dinner will be getting cold."

When they were all at the table and Grandfather had taken the edge off his appetite, the children began to ask him questions.

"What was Philadelphia like, Grandfather?" was the first question.

"Well, Peter, it's a bigger place than Nantucket, and there are even more Quakers in the streets."

"And are they like the Quakers here?"

"Yes, indeed. The women-folk wear the same gray clothes and bonnets, and the men their black. And they are just as fine people as the Quakers here. But I'm too much of a fighting man myself to be a Quaker."

"Did you have a good time in Philadelphia?" asked Mary, politely.

"A very good time. But I believe Nantuck-

et's the best place on earth, and an old fellow like me that's been knocking 'round the world all his life'd better stay at home."

"What did you do all the time?"

"Well, after I finished my business, I looked up all my friends, and they were very kind and asked me to their houses. They do know how to cook in Philadelphia"—Grandfather chuckled—"but I didn't taste anything better than this chicken, and I think I'd like some more."

"Are any of your Philadelphia friends Quakers?" asked Peter.

"Yes, they are, and I told them about Captain Henry Barnard, just to see what they would say, and they said it had been very right and proper."

"Oh, please tell us about Captain Henry Barnard!" cried the children.

"Why," said Grandfather, "I suppose I've told you that story twenty times already, but I'll tell it once more if you want me to."

So he began: "Well, before you children were born, my friend, Henry Barnard, was captain of the *Foxwell*, a fine vessel that sailed from the port of Boston. He was a good Quaker, and hated fighting as much as any other Quaker—you know they believe in peace, always.

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"The sea wasn't very safe in those days. There were pirates, and then, too, there was war between France and England, and our ships were always in danger of mutiny among the crew.

"But Captain Henry Barnard had to sail the *Foxwell*, danger or no danger, though it made him very sad to think that his fine ship might be captured and lose her cargo, or that his sailors might mutiny. So, when he was fitting out for one of his voyages, he had firearms hidden in the hold, so that if the *Foxwell* should be attacked, he could defend her.

"Well, he had good luck, and he never had to use the firearms, but when he got home to Nantucket, there was a great to-do. Instead of being glad to see him safely home, all his Quaker friends began to shake their heads, for, you see, someone had told them about the firearms. The more they thought about it, the worse it was, and, in the end, what did they do but read him out of meeting for going to sea in an armed vessel."

"Then what did he say?"

"He said they might be right, but if the *Foxwell* had been attacked, he would have been mighty glad he had those guns."

"Thank you, Grandfather," said Peter, "but I wish he had been in a fight."

"What else did you do in Philadelphia, Grandfather?" asked Mary.

"Let me see—oh, I hunted 'round all the shops, and when my trunk comes, we will find something in it for Mother."

"How very kind of you, Father," said Mrs. Macy.

"And something for a good boy and for a good girl," continued Grandfather.

"Oh, what is it?" cried both children at once.

"Wait till the sailor brings up the trunk," said Grandfather. "Now, what have you been doing while I was away?"

Mary tried to think, but Peter hung his head.

"I did a whole line in my sampler," Mary exclaimed, after pondering deeply. "I'll show it to you after dinner."

"And what did you do, Peter?"

Peter did not answer.

"Why, Peter, you weeded Mother's garden, didn't he, Mother?"

"Yes, he did that," said Mother, "but he did something else, too, that he is going to tell you about."

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"And what was that?" asked Grandfather.

Peter plucked up his courage.

"I went in swimming last Saturday in the creek."

"That was a very foolish thing to do," said Grandfather. "Don't you know better than that, Peter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, never mind now; when the trunk comes, we'll see what is in it for you all. Now, children, I want forty winks after dinner. You help your mother with the dinner things and then have a game of jackstraws, and if the trunk isn't here by that time, we'll go down to the wharf and hunt it up."

So, while Grandfather dozed in the easy chair in the corner, Mother and Judith cleared the table, and Mary swept the floor with her little broom.

Peter got a stool to stand on, so that he could reach the red lacquer box of jackstraws on top of the dresser. This box had been brought from China by the children's father on one of his voyages. Outside, it was beautifully smooth and red, with pictures in black and gold of flowers and butterflies; inside were many little boxes

which held strange coins and beads, and best of all, the ivory jackstraws. These were tiny ivory sticks, some shaped like little hatchets, others like arrows, rakes, ladders, hoes, or spears. The children put them in a heap on the table and each, holding a little stick with a hook in the end of it, took turns trying to lift one jackstraw out of the pile without moving any of the others. It was a hard thing to do, for the jackstraws were slippery and fell back, time after time.

It was very quiet. Grandfather slept in his big armchair; the clock on the wall ticked slowly; and Mother's spinning wheel whirred softly as she spun wool for the children's stockings.

Suddenly, there was a loud rap on the street door. Up jumped Peter and Mary; Grandfather opened his eyes with a start; and Mother broke her thread.

"It's the trunk!"

And Peter ran to the door with Mary after him. He was right: there stood a sailor with Grandfather's trunk on a wheelbarrow.

"Does Captain Howland live here?" he asked.

Grandfather appeared behind the children.

"Right here, Leander. I'll give you a hand."

But the sailor lifted the trunk by himself and brought it into the house. It was a small trunk, covered with horsehair and studded with brass-headed nails. The sailor took it into Grandfather's room, and came out, pulling his forelock and bowing to Grandfather as he put two coins into his pocket.

"Thank 'ee, sir, thank 'ee."

The children waited outside Grandfather's door. They heard him unlock the trunk and open it, and then they caught the rustle of paper.

At last he appeared in the doorway with a large box and two small bundles.

"This is for your mother," and, carrying the box under his arm, he went into the kitchen. The children followed him.

"For me?" smiled Mother. She opened the box and took out a lovely leghorn bonnet with a white curled feather.

"Oh, Father, how beautiful! How clever of you to be able to choose a hat for me by yourself!"

"Put it on," said Grandfather. So Mother stood in front of the looking glass and put on the bonnet. She looked very pretty in it, but Peter and Mary were so anxious to know what was in

the bundles that they had no eyes for the bonnet.

"Now for the others," said Grandfather. "The larger one is for Peter, and this one is for you, Mary."

The children opened their parcels at the same time: each one was a book. Peter's was "Robinson Crusoe," and Mary had "The Story of Little Dame Crump."

"Oh, Grandfather, thank you!" cried Mary. Peter said "thank you," too. He sat down by the dresser at once and began to look at the book; Mary turned over the pages of hers.

"Oh, Mother, see the pig! Won't you read some of it to me now?"

Mary was only five years old and she could not read well.

"I will read you a little of it," said her mother, "and then you must put the books away and go out of doors for the rest of the afternoon."

So Mother sat in her rocking-chair, and Mary on a cricket at her feet, and this is what she read:

"Little Dame Crump
With her little hair broom,
Was sweeping one morning
Her little bedroom;

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When, casting her little gray eyes on the
ground,
In a snug little corner a penny she found.

“ ‘Odd’s bobs!’ cried the Dame;
She started with surprise.
‘How lucky I am!
Bless my heart, what a prize!
To market I’ll go and a pig I will buy,
And little John Gubbins shall make him a sty.’

“So she washed her face clean,
And put on her gown,
Locked up the house,
And set off for town:
Where to market she went and a pig she did
find,
Black and white and just to her mind!”

Then Mother stopped.

“Oh, Mother, won’t you read some more,
please!”

“Not now—don’t tease, Mary—run out and
play, and after supper I will read more.”

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So the children reluctantly put their books in the cupboard and went out to play. On the way to the door, Mary whispered in her grandfather's ear:

"That's the best present I ever had!"

CHAPTER IV

SHEEP SHEARING

FOR months after his father had gone to sea, Peter remembered what he had said, and he worked hard at his lessons. He went to the Town School with his cousins, Samuel and Peleg Chase. Obed, the youngest Chase boy, and Peter's sister Mary went to a small school kept by a Quakeress, whom they called Cousin Hepzibah. She held the school in her little house which stood in a lane leading out to the open fields. The boys wrote on slates; Mary and the other girls embroidered the alphabet on canvas; they all had spelling and arithmetic.

One day in May, the children at Mary's school had a great adventure.

It was Thursday morning, and Cousin Hepzibah had gone to Quaker meeting as usual, leaving the school in charge of the oldest girl. Mary and her friends were walking up and down the

little paths in the schoolmistress's tiny garden, and the boys were playing leap-frog in the lane. It was Obed's turn to be frog, and just as he made his last hop, two black-faced sheep and an old ram came 'round the corner and trotted toward the boys. Obed landed with a thump and they stopped short.

He waved his arms at them and shouted:

"Hi! Hi!"

The other boys waved their arms and shouted, running as near the ram as they dared. He was a cross old beast and did not move, but put down his head, shaking it from side to side. The boys had seen only little sheep come down the lane before, and they were timid about going too near such an old crosspatch.

"Let's throw stones at him!" cried Obed, and a volley of sticks and pebbles flew at the ram, and a stone hit him on the nose.

Instead of frightening him, this made him furiously angry, and he started toward the boys so suddenly that he took them by surprise and butted Joseph Bunker, who was nearest, head over heels. The little girls, who had been hanging over the fence, began to jump up and down and cry.

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Just as the ram made ready for another rush, Cousin Hepzibah came up the lane. She paid no attention to him, but walked stiffly by, through the gate and into the school, and then rang her bell loudly.

"Boys, boys, come in at once!"

The boys were glad to obey. They crowded through the gate, Joseph Bunker all dusty and tumbled, trying hard to keep from crying. Obed was last, and he slammed the gate in the ram's face.

"Good-bye, old ram!" he cried. The boys were very brave as soon as the gate was shut.

Then another boy shouted:

"Good-bye, old black-faced Billy,
At shearing time you'll look silly!"

And the wit of the school took it up—

"Just wait till June,
You'll change your tune."

Cousin Hepzibah came to the door.

"Boys, come in at once. It is not kind to tease any animal, even an old black sheep. Joseph,

go out to the pump and wash thy hands—here is a brush for thy clothes.”

The three sheep that had strayed down the lane had come from the open commons where thousands of sheep grazed. They were not kept in pastures, and they had no shepherds to take care of them; they roamed about eating what they could find, and getting very ragged and dirty. Winter was not so cold in Nantucket as on the mainland, and there were neither wild animals nor cruel dogs to harm the sheep, so they got along fairly well. Every year, on the second Monday in June, they were all sheared, and there was usually enough wool for the people of the Island, and some besides, that could be sent to the mainland and sold.

During the week before shearing day the sheep were driven into great pens beside Mia-comet Pond, and on Saturday they were washed. On shearing day, everyone on the Island had a holiday and went out to see the fun. They took their lunch with them, or bought it at the booths and tents set up for the occasion.

Peter's Uncle Samuel owned many sheep and always provided lunch for his shearers and his family in his own tent. Aunt Betsy, his wife,

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was busy, all the week before, baking and roasting, packing the good things into a trunk that was sent out to the tent on the morning of shearing day.

This year, Mary was going to the shearing for the first time, while Peter was to be allowed to leave the family as soon as they reached Mia-comet, and enjoy the day with his friends.

When Grandfather came home from the sheep-washing on Saturday night, the children asked him questions faster than he could answer them:

"Are all the tents up?"

"Are there any more sheep than last year?"

"Did any one get tumbled over into the pond?"

"Yes," said Grandfather, "your Uncle Sam'l went splash over backward. We couldn't help laughing."

"My!" said Peter. "I wish I could have seen it! Maybe it was that old black ram that came to Mary's school."

"Perhaps it was," agreed Grandfather. "I should have asked him if he knew a little girl named Mary Macy."

The Sunday before the shearing was a beauti-

ful day. During church, the sun went in, but it must have been behind a passing cloud, for it came out again as the minister said the benediction. At sunset, Grandfather took the children up on the walk. They heard meadow larks calling good-night, and saw the still blue harbor and the enormous red sun sinking below the clear horizon. When Grandfather said:

"Well, it will be a fine day to-morrow," Peter felt perfectly happy.

He lay awake for hours, and then slept so hard that Grandfather had to call him in the morning.

"Peter, Peter, are you up?"

No little boy ever dressed faster. Clatter, clatter, his stout little shoes sounded on the stairs. The family were already at breakfast, and grace had been said. Mother looked at him reprov-ingly but did not say anything. Mary had on her best dress—a white one with little sprigs of pink flowers all over it.

After breakfast, Grandfather and Peter walked down the street to Gibraltar's stable, harnessed him, and drove him back to the house. Mother and Mary were waiting at the gate with hampers of lunch beside them. Their Nan-

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tucket cart had no seats, so Grandfather lifted in two wooden chairs and two crickets. He helped Mrs. Macy in over the wheel, popped the children in behind, climbed to his own seat, and they were off.

As the crowd in the road grew, Gibraltar went more and more slowly, until Grandfather could not urge him out of a walk. But it was not long before they could see the flags flying over the tents, and then at last the tents themselves. When they reached the place where Gibraltar was to be left, Grandfather turned to Peter.

"I can unharness alone; you cut along and see the sights."

These were welcome words, and the little boy started off at a run toward the sheep pens. His mother called after him:

"Remember to come to your Uncle Sam'l's tent for dinner at twelve o'clock!"

He turned and waved his hand to show that he had heard, and then ran on to where he saw Joseph and Benjamin Bunker standing beside the shearing pens.

"Hi, Joseph!" he panted as he reached them.

"Hello," answered Joseph, "come on, we're

going to try and get near the fence and see the men shearing—they're at it now."

A great crowd of men and big boys was pushing up to the outer fence of the sheep pens, and the little boys could not see past them. They could hear the bleating of the sheep and that was all. However, by squeezing through the crowd, they managed to reach the fence, where a good-natured man made room for them. On the left, they could see the pasture where the lambs were playing. The sheep were in the great round enclosure in front of the boys. Peter tried to count them, but he might as well have tried to count the waves in the harbor. A number of men were pushing among the sheep, sorting them out in a circle around the shearing space.

"There's Father! See, Ben, there's Father shearing that black-faced sheep," exclaimed Joseph.

"Where?" cried Ben and Peter together.

"Over beyond Mr. Chase's shearers. See? He's getting a lot of wool off her!"

Mr. Bunker always did his own shearing, for he did not own more than twenty sheep.

Many of the shearers came from Cape Cod,

and some of them were very skillful, but none was quicker or surer than Mr. Bunker. Peter could see the heavy fleece falling on to the sail-cloth which was spread on the ground, and 'Lijah, Mr. Bunker's helper, carrying it off to the wool table to be tied up.

"There! He's finished that one!" cried Ben, as Mr. Bunker straightened up and wiped the sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand.

"My! that must be hot work!" exclaimed Joseph, "and there's 'Lijah letting out the next one. See, Peter, watch him throw her down!"

Mr. Bunker leaned forward, caught the sheep by one hind leg and gave her a push, so that she sat down like a begging dog. The fleece was shorn from her stomach with a few quick clips of the shears, and the little boys watched spell-bound as Mr. Bunker threw her down, first on one side and then on the other, to shear her back and sides.

The bewildered creature soon stood forth looking very strange and naked, and was pushed through a gate into the lambs' field. Out came the next sheep to be shorn, then another and another. The shearers all about Mr. Bunker were

bending to their work, to see who could shear the greatest number.

"Well, I've seen as much as I want to of this," remarked Joseph, after a while, "come on over and see what's going on at the big tent."

"I'd better go to Uncle Sam'l's, now," said Peter, "it must be nearly dinner time."

"Oh, never mind that—they won't care if you're a little late, and besides, I'm sure there's plenty of time. Come along with us."

Thus urged, Peter gave in, and all three set off for the large tent which was pitched at a little distance away, and was now surrounded by a boisterous crowd of holiday makers. Red and yellow flags fluttered about it, and lively music came from the fiddler stationed outside. The boys pressed through the crowd to the door of the tent, where they stood glued to the spot, trying to see everything at once.

The business of eating and drinking was going merrily forward in the tent where a noisy crowd of men and boys were laughing and singing as they pushed 'round the tables where the good things were for sale. A few rode 'round and 'round on the flying horses, shouting to urge on their steeds, and firing off Chinese crackers.

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There was a platform outside for the fiddler, who was playing a lively jig, to which he beat time with his buckled shoes. Three rough-looking sailors were dancing away on a plank for dear life, and as Peter watched, one of them, who was very fat, slipped and sat down hard. A loud roar of laughter went up on all sides; the fat sailor picked himself up and, snatching a foaming mug of ale from a bystander, swallowed it at a gulp. Then he started dancing again harder than ever.

"Peter," whispered Joseph, "let's go a little way into the tent. Let's buy some of the cakes over on that table."

"All right," answered Peter. The three boys slipped in and edged their way to the long table, covered with a white cloth, which was spread with good things to eat: Great rounds of beef, ready to slice, loaves of cake with thick frosting, dishes of candied fruits and jugs of ginger pop. There were three colored women to sell the food, but they were all so busy talking and giggling with some shearers who had just come in for their dinner that they did not notice the little boys at all. Joseph, Peter, and Benjamin stood quite still and waited politely. They each had



Three rough-looking sailors were dancing

a few pennies to spend, but as they did not know how much any of the things cost, they could not choose. Pretty soon Peter whispered to Ben.

"I know the ginger pop is four pennies, how many have you got?"

"Sixpence," answered Ben.

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do—let's leave the money on the table and each take a mug full."

The crowd jostled the boys, stepped on their feet, and pushed them this way and that. The noise in the tent was growing louder every minute, and Peter felt suddenly very empty and faint. Breakfast had been a long time ago. The ginger pop looked deliciously cool, but no one would pay any attention to them. So each boy put four pennies on the table and took a mug.

The air was cooler outside the tent, and they stopped in the shade to enjoy their drink.

Just as Peter was holding his mug upside down to get the last drop, he suddenly remembered about dinner at his Uncle Sam'l's tent. He almost dropped the mug, for he was sure it was long past twelve, and he would be punished for being late.

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Without a word to the Bunker boys, he started off at a run. The Chases' tent was second in the row of sheep-owners' tents, and Peter could see the Chase boys sitting on the ground outside.

"Hello, Peter!" they called, "you'll catch it—you're about an hour late."

Peter did not answer, although he agreed with every word they said. He was very much afraid he would be sent home without his dinner. As he walked into the tent, he tried to look as though nothing were the matter. All the grown-ups had finished their dinner.

"Well, my boy," said his mother, "you're very late, but we won't say anything about it."

"Can't be punished on holidays, can we?" asked jolly Aunt Betsy. "Here's some cold beef we saved for you, and a few of your mother's doughnuts."

Peter felt happy at not being scolded; he managed to say "thank you," and then he ate three large slices of beef and bread, one after another, and followed these with doughnuts.

"All you children run along, now," said Aunt Betsy, "and let us elders have the tent to ourselves in peace and quiet. Keep out of mischief if you can," she added with a laugh.

The children obediently left the tent and went to watch the lambs and their mothers. A great bleating and baa-ing went on continually, as sheep after sheep was let out of the shearing pen, looking very naked, and each finding her own lamb.

"See that dear little thing!" Mary pointed to a poor little lamb in the corner that was bleating piteously, "where can its mother be?"

"Oh, she'll turn up," answered Peleg; "she probably hasn't been shorn yet."

But the afternoon wore on, the last sheep was shorn, and still the lamb was motherless. At last Uncle Samuel came along.

"Time to go home, children, step lively, now. We must get back by six o'clock."

Mary seized his hand.

"Oh, Uncle, couldn't we do something about this poor little lamb? I think its mother is lost and it will starve."

"Why, its mother must be right 'round somewhere," said Uncle Samuel.

"Oh, no, no! Every single sheep has its lamb, and this little one is left. Couldn't we take him home with us?"

"Well, we'll have to ask Mother, Mary. Per-

haps she will allow you to. And it can do no harm to catch it."

Uncle Samuel climbed into the pen and walked slowly up behind the lamb, so that he would not frighten it, and took it in his arms. It lay there quietly and only bleated once or twice as they carried it to the tent.

Mary's mother and Aunt Betsy were packing up the plates and cups, and the little that was left of the lunch.

"What have you got there, Sam'l?" exclaimed Aunt Betsy.

"A lamb that Mary wants to take home, if her mother will let her."

"Oh, Mary," said her mother, "it will be a great deal of trouble."

"Oh, please, please, Mother, let me keep it," begged Mary. "I'll take all the care of it, and feed it every day. It hasn't any mother, and it will die if we don't."

"What do you think, Father?" Mrs. Macy turned to Mary's grandfather.

"I think it would be a good thing for Mary, if she would look after it herself."

Mary was too happy to speak, but she squeezed her mother's hand hard. Grandfather lifted

the lamb carefully into the cart, and they started home. Mary forgot to say good-bye to the Chases. All the way back, she planned how she would take care of the lamb and bring it up to be a big sheep. Next year it would be shorn, and perhaps Mother could spare enough wool from its fleece so that Mary could knit mittens for her father and have them ready for him when he came home from his voyage.



CHAPTER V

SHOOTING WITH GRANDFATHER

THE sheep-shearing day was the great holiday of the year for the Nantucket children. After a few weeks of summer vacation, school began again, and in the autumn, the short afternoons were full of work. Peter helped Grandfather hitch Gibraltar into the cart and go to the docks for the winter supply of firewood. All the wood came to Nantucket in schooners, and had to be piled into carts and driven home. Peter and Grandfather had to make several trips before they got the wood all in, and even then their task was not finished: every log must be sawn in two before it could be used in the fireplaces. Peter was not big enough to manage the heavy saw, but he could carry the logs one by one from the yard to the wood shed, where Grandfather was cutting them up.

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"Father," said Mrs. Macy, on the second day, "I don't think you should try to saw all that yourself—it is too much for one person to undertake. Do stop now, and to-morrow send for the oldest Tapley boy to finish it. He is a great hulking fellow, and I don't think he does half as much as he might to help his mother. It would really be a kindness to the Widow Tapley to give him the work."

"Well—perhaps; we'll see—in the morning we can send for him, if you think best. Here, Peter, where are you? We'll never be done at this rate."

Peter was silent as he staggered in from the yard with another log. Would he ever be finished with carrying logs and piling them up? His back ached and his fingers were bruised. Grandfather was very strict about how the wood was piled.

"If you don't pack it in just so," he would say, "you will waste space, and the wood may come down on your head some fine day. I don't like the look of those sticks in the righthand corner. Pull them down and lay them tighter from the beginning."

Poor Peter! He was ready to cry.

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"I wish I were at sea," he muttered, as he began wearily to pull down the wood; "there wouldn't be firewood to pile."

"What's that? What's that?" Grandfather's sharp ears had caught Peter's grumbling.

"You would find plenty of work much harder and not half so clean."

Just then the door from the kitchen opened, sending into the darkening shed a bright shaft of light and a delicious smell of newly baked bread.

"Supper-time, Peter," called his mother. Peter scrambled down off the wood pile and darted in the door. He washed his hands in a basin of warm water that Mrs. Macy had set for him on the chair nearest the shed door, and slipped quietly into his chair. His porringer of bread and milk was empty in a twinkling, and he was busy with a second helping before Mary had got settled in her seat.

"I think Peter deserves some jelly with his supper," said Grandfather, coming in from the shed; "he has worked long and faithfully to-day."

Mrs. Macy opened the door of the cupboard farthest from the fireplace. Rows and rows of neatly labeled jars stood on the shelves.

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"May I have some, Mother?" begged Mary. "I've worked hard, too."

"Yes, my dear, you have been a very good girl to-day, and if you continue to apply yourself, you will soon be able to knit very well. Here is some of the crab-apple jelly for you both."

The lower part of the cupboard was half empty; it had no shelves, but it was used as a place to set away extra kettles and other bulky things.

"If you would take your lantern out, Father, and carry those preserving kettles up attic for me, I could put that great roll of cloth in there. It was just sent over to-day from the fulling mill."

"Oh, Mother, may I see the cloth? What color is it?" Mary was all excitement.

"It is brown, Mary, just the same color that we had last year."

Mary's face fell.

"Oh, dear, I did so want a blue dress. Louisa Chase is going to have a blue dress and a beaver bonnet. I do wish——"

"That will do, Mary," broke in her mother. "Beaver bonnets are only suitable for church.

Your knitted bonnet will do perfectly well for school, and if you had not been so hasty, I should have told you that I intend making you a blue dress for best this winter. As for the brown, it is an excellent color, and you know very well that it is the only color that Mr. Jenkins succeeds with."

Mary dried her eyes which had filled with tears.

"In your flurry you have managed to drop jelly on my clean floor. Run quickly and get some scouring sand."

Mary slipped down from the chair and ran out to where the scouring sand was kept. It was dark there, but she knew where the crock with the sand stood. She plunged her hand into it: the crock was empty.

"There's no more sand, Mother, it's all gone," cried Mary, running back into the kitchen.

Mrs. Macy was taking her last baking of bread out of the oven.

"Quietly, Mary, quietly, I can hear you without your shouting. Peter, you will have to get me some more scouring sand from your barrel

in the barn. I had no idea it was so nearly used up. Let me see—I shall need a good deal; fully sixteen quarts to get through till April. Have you that much?”

“I think I have,” answered Peter. “Peleg and I got a great deal last spring. Peleg sold his for five cents a quart to Aunt Betsy and the neighbors on Pleasant Street, but I charged six cents and I have a good deal left.”

“I will pay you for what you give me—at six cents a quart,” said his mother; “sixteen quarts will be nearly a dollar. It will help toward your new shoes.”

Peter resolved to sell a great deal more sand to housewives of his acquaintance; he knew very well that he needed new shoes, but he wanted also to add to a small fund he was saving to buy himself an outfit which could be worn at sea.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Macy had wiped up the jelly on the floor with a damp cloth, and was tidying the kitchen for the night. Grandfather sat by the lamp, reading the Nantucket paper. This newspaper was published once a week, and eagerly read by the Nantucket people; there

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were many local advertisements, and notices of the births and deaths in it, but the news concerned the world away from the Island.

"Dear me," said Grandfather, "I didn't know old Jeremiah Patch had died."

"Has he?" said Mother. "He was a very unpleasant old man."

"Yes, but he was a humorous old fellow," smiled Grandfather. "I remember meeting him on Union Street one day, when he was carrying home a bag of mouldy cornmeal. I said to him, 'Well, Jeremiah, how's your family?'—You know he had fourteen children. 'Fair to middlin',' said he. Then I told him I didn't see how he managed to fill so many mouths. 'Ho!' said he, 'I'll tell you how I do it. I give them plenty to eat of what they don't like!'"

"I'm sure he did," remarked Mrs. Macy. Grandfather went on reading the paper.

"I see that Jonathan Smiley had a bit o' luck—listen: 'Found, a vessel's longboat—apply to J. Smiley.' It isn't likely the owner will claim it. Oh, listen to this, Prudence, it shows you what silly fellows mariners can be."

"'Portraits painted on expectation of the voyage.' Imagine any man of sense promising

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his share of a cargo so as to leave his likeness hanging on the wall!"

"Father, may I see whether Marks and Pitman have received their London cassimere?"

Grandfather handed the paper to Mother, who put down her knitting.

"Let me see, oh, yes," and she read: "'Superfine London black, blue and mixed broadcloth and cassimeres.' I shall go down and look them over some day this week."

This made Mary look more cheerful. Perhaps the cassimere was to be for her best dress.

Mrs. Macy glanced down the column.

"Here is something I am glad to see: 'Bales of live goose feathers in quantities to suit purchaser.' I wonder if they are very dear. I should like to get some; that feather bed in your room should be done over, Father."

"Don't you fret about my bed; but if you want feathers, don't go down street buying them; Peter and I will go and get all you need."

"Oh, Grandfather," cried Peter. He knew Grandfather meant to take him shooting, and he was delighted. All the beds in the house were stuffed with feathers from the geese and ducks shot in Nantucket, and the softest down was

saved and made up into little pillows which were used in time of sickness. The birds from which these feathers were taken were very plentiful, and Grandfather went off shooting several times a year. He sometimes let Peter shoot his gun off, loading it lightly, and having Peter rest it against a fence rail or post, for it was too heavy for him to hold up to his shoulder. Peter had never brought down a bird, but he was sure the day was coming when he would.

"I won't promise goose feathers," said Grandfather. "Mostly ducks; but duck feathers are good to sleep on, and if you need some, Prudence, we'll go shooting on Saturday."

"May I go, Mother?"

"What time shall you start and return, Father?"

"Oh, about an hour before sunrise. It takes Gibraltar longer than it used to, but we'll get back soon after breakfast. I'll see that Peter doesn't come to any harm."

"Then, if he is a good boy, he may go."

Peter tried very hard for the rest of the week to be good. He remembered to bring in the wood before he was asked to, he filled all the pails full of water from the well before break-

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fast, he washed his face and hands before his mother told him to, and never said a word when Mary dropped two of his blue-and-white marbles down the well. So, when Friday came, Peter's good record for the week brought him permission to go.

"I'll wake you up, Peter, and if your mother will make us up some slices of bread and butter, we can eat our breakfast as we go along."

Peter thought he had hardly closed his eyes before he felt Grandfather shaking his shoulder gently.

"Get up, Peter, hurry and dress; be quiet. Where's your candle, boy?"

"There on the shelf."

Grandfather lighted it for Peter to dress by. They were soon out of the house, picking their way to the barn by the light of the lantern Grandfather carried. Gibraltar was lying on his side; Peter thought he looked very awkward and foolish, as Grandfather went in. They harnessed in a jiffy, and rattled out of the barn. Along Orange Street and out on the Polpis Road, all the houses were dark as they drove along. The first light they saw was in a little cottage on the left.

"That's an old Indian's house," remarked Grandfather. "I pity the Indians: once they owned the Island, and enjoyed the hunting and fishing just as we do now, but soon they'll be gone."

"Did there use to be as many Indians as there are white people now?"

"No," answered Grandfather, "but there were a goodly number. The first white settlers had great difficulty with them. The Indians could never be made to understand that land could be bought and sold. An Indian would sell a piece of land, be paid good money for it, and then go on tramping over it and using it as if it were still his. The owner would have him arrested for trespass, and bring him into court. Then he would be fined, and if he couldn't pay the fine, they would take away his pig, or whatever live stock he had. That would confuse the Indian worse than ever—he could never understand what the loss of his pig had to do with walking on some land that had always been his."

"And where are they all now?"

"They had a great sickness, and two thirds of them died. The white people went among them and nursed them, and some of them got it, too,

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but for some reason, they weren't nearly as likely to get it as the Indians. After the sickness, there were not many more than a hundred left, and they died off, little by little, until now there are only about half a dozen of them; some of those are half-breeds. There are still Indians on the Vineyard, and the Gay Head Indians are famous harpooners, you know."

"Were they ever cruel to the settlers?"

"There was some trouble, but there's been peace now for a hundred years; there were too few of them left to rise against us."

Peter felt a little uneasy, as he always did when it was dark and people talked about Indians; but the sky was beginning to be light in the east, and the Indian's house was soon left behind. At the opening of a sandy path that led down to the shore, Grandfather fastened Gibraltar to a cedar tree; they walked down toward the beach and waited behind a sand dune for the ducks to fly over.

The sky was red in the east when the first birds appeared. Grandfather was still a good shot, and Peter saw three drop; he ran eagerly to pick them up and waited for his chance to shoot until Grandfather had brought down ten.

Then it was Peter's turn: the gun was propped up on an old fence post in the sand, and he waited, his heart beating fast. Nothing happened for a few minutes, and then one lone bird appeared suddenly. Peter aimed the gun as well as he could and pulled the trigger. Bang! the bird fell. The gun knocked Peter over backward, for Grandfather had forgotten to put in a light load, but Peter did not care. His first shot! He picked himself up and ran to the bird.

"That's no duck," called Grandfather, and indeed it was not, a fine goose lay in the beach grass. Peter was overjoyed; his first bird a goose! What a beauty he was!

Grandfather admired him very much, too.

"Now, Peter, we'll be starting back. It's setting in for a bad day."

The bright red sky had turned gray, and fog crept across the dunes. They had a good load to carry back to the cart. Gibraltar was waiting patiently for them; they turned him 'round, put the birds in the back of the cart, and started home. Grandfather found a last sandwich in his pocket, and except for the fog, which was growing thicker every minute, Peter was happy.

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They jogged along in silence until Grandfather said:

"Peter, did you notice that fence when we came out? It's a new fence," continued Grandfather, "and I think I should have noticed if we had passed it. I haven't been paying much attention to the ruts; Gibraltar usually goes home by the shortest way. Here, you old stupid, have you taken the wrong turn?"

Gibraltar flicked one of his ears and ambled along.

"Well, I never saw any thicker fog. Peter, did you ever get lost on the commons?"

"No, I never have," said Peter in a small voice. Grandfather seemed to think it was amusing but Peter was afraid of the commons in a fog. Among the boys, there were tales of Indians who prowled around the Island when they could not be seen for fog or darkness.

"Let's take this turn," and Grandfather pulled Gibraltar into a rut at the left.

Peter had hoped he wouldn't, for to the left lay the Indian's house. Peter knew that people said they were offensive and quiet, but Indians were Indians, and he might still have his tomahawk hidden under a loose board.

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"I should think the right would be the way to go," ventured Peter.

"That might take us into Wauwinet. Look, isn't that a house, Peter?"

It looked like a house, and to Peter's distress, it looked like the house he feared.

"Jump out, Peter, and see what house it is. I can't pull Gibraltar out of this rut to get over to it."

Peter did not know what to do. He was terrified to go over to the house alone, yet he knew he would be well scolded by Grandfather if he confessed his fears, and would have to go, just the same. He climbed slowly down over the wheel and then stopped and pretended to tie his shoe.

"Don't be so slow, Peter. Go and knock if you can't tell what house it is."

Peter walked a few steps toward the house; as it grew more distinct, the cart faded from sight behind him in the fog. It certainly looked like the Indian's house, but most of the little Nantucket houses were built in the same way. If there were only some way he could tell without knocking! He scanned the house closely;

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good! there was a horseshoe over the door—an Indian wouldn't put a horseshoe over his door. He ran back to the cart.

"Grandfather, there's a horseshoe over the door!"

"Well, what of that? Why didn't you knock?"

"I didn't want to," said Peter. "Don't you know whose house has a horseshoe?"

"I don't remember all the houses out this way. We usually go shooting up on the Cliff. Now, go along, Peter, knock, and find out where we are."

So Peter turned back. If only the fog would lift so that he could see the cart from the door of the house. But Gibraltar and Grandfather were swallowed up, and he was alone before the door. His heart was in his mouth as he knocked, softly. No sound from the house. He walked a few steps away.

"There isn't any one here, Grandfather," he called out.

"Try again," was the answer.

Peter decided to get it over with: he knocked louder. This time he heard steps inside the

house. As they approached the door, he backed a few paces away. The door opened slowly and an old lady in a white cap peered out.

"Did somebody knock?" she asked in a quav-
ery voice.

Peter stepped forward and pulled off his cap.

"Please'm—I'm Peter Macy, and my grand-
father and I have lost our way. Can you direct
us to town?"

"Take the first turn to the left, and then the
first to the right, and you'll come out on the Pol-
pis Road. I guess you'll know when you are
there."

"Thank you very much, ma'am." Peter was
very much relieved and very polite. He ran
back to the cart and climbed in.

"It's all right; did you hear what she said,
Grandfather?"

"Yes, who was she?"

"I don't know. She had on a big white cap."

"Old Mrs. Hopkins lives out this way, with
her good-for-nothing son. Perhaps it was she.
Gibraltar, you're a stupid old horse—get up!"

Grandfather slapped the reins on Gibraltar's
back with no effect; they jogged on at the pace
which suited Gibraltar and were soon out on the

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Polpis Road. The fog turned to rain as they came into town, and rattled up Orange Street. Safe home again, after their "adventure" in the fog, with a big load of ducks in the cart for Mother.

"What a splendid morning," thought Peter, as he hung up his wet coat and hat in the shed. He ran up the steps into the kitchen.

"Mother, Mother!" he shouted, "I shot a real goose, myself!"



CHAPTER VI

THE PARROT

ONE Sunday morning in June, when Captain Macy had been gone almost two years, Peter and Mary started for church with their mother and grandfather. They walked slowly down the path—Mary, proud of her blue bonnet, hand-in-hand with Mother, and Peter, dressed in his tight Sunday trousers and jacket and starched shirt, walking behind with Grandfather.

As they opened the gate, a ragged little boy ran up the street toward them. He paid no attention to the Macy family, and was darting by, when Grandfather put out his hand and caught him by the shoulder:

"Boy, what is the matter? Why are you running on the Sabbath?"

"Oh, please let me go!" cried the boy. "There's a vessel off the bar, and they think it's the *Endymion*—Captain Coffin, you know—and I'm going to be the first to tell Mrs. Coffin, and I'll get the dollar!"

"Well," smiled Grandfather, "good luck to you!" and the boy scampered off.

"Will he really get a dollar?" asked Mary.

"He will if he is the first boy there, and if the vessel is the *Endymion*," replied Grandfather.

"The *Endymion* has been gone three years, has she not?" asked Mrs. Macy.

"If I remember rightly, she has."

"When will she dock?" inquired Peter.

"Let me see," said Grandfather, "it will be high water in an hour, and if it is the *Endymion*, she is a small enough vessel to come right in over the bar."

"You mean she wouldn't have to be lightered like the *Empress*?"

"Perhaps it isn't the *Endymion*," suggested Peter.

"Oh," cried Mary, "perhaps it's Father's ship!"

"No, Mary," said Mrs. Macy, "the *Empress* has not yet been gone two years; we cannot look for her so soon."

They reached the church and filed into their family pew. The church was very large, but by the time the service began, there were no empty seats. Uncle Samuel and Aunt Betsy, with their five children, sat near the Macys, and Peter felt happier when he saw that Peleg looked as if he were just as uncomfortable in his Sunday clothes as he himself.

The service began with a hymn. The organ was at the back of the church, and when the congregation sang, everyone turned 'round and faced the organ. This was amusing, for that day there were strangers in church, who did not know what was happening, and turned around in a great hurry, after everyone else.

The children were each given a penny to put in the contribution box, and this Sunday, Peter forgot to take his penny out of his pocket until the boy came into the pew. Then he felt for it, but his pocket was full, and the penny had gone to the very bottom. He took out the things one by one, and laid them on the seat of the pew; his handkerchief, very dirty, a stone like an

arrowhead, a piece of spruce gum, a china marble, a sling, a shark's egg, and a piece of wood he had been whittling. He grew redder and redder as each came out and no penny. His mother and grandfather sat watching him gravely. When the penny at last appeared, Peter drew a long breath and the box went on. He knew the whole church had been watching him, and he thought they had been saying to themselves, "What a foolish little boy that Peter Macy is!"

In the middle of the sermon, a bumblebee got into church and buzzed up and down the window nearest Peter. His back was aching and his feet had gone to sleep, the sermon was so long; but the bumblebee cured him at once. He was not afraid of bumblebees, but he knew that many grown-up people were, and he watched its buzzing journey up and down the pane in hope it would fly toward the pews and sting someone. The bee was still for a moment, then it turned and flew into the church straight toward a cross-looking old lady who always sat in front of them. Peter almost laughed, he was so pleased. The old lady took out a large handkerchief and flapped it at the bee, but that did

no good—the bee lit on her bonnet. Then Grandfather leaned forward with his red bandanna in his hand, quietly folded the bee in it, rose, and walked out. The children looked at each other, smiling as much as they dared, and they noticed that even the grown-up people near them were not paying attention to the sermon.

As they walked down the street after church, Peter said:

“Grandfather, weren’t you afraid the bee would sting you?”

And Mary added:

“I think you were very brave, Grandfather.”

Grandfather smiled.

“That bee would have to sting pretty hard to get through my bandanna and into my hands.”

Mary looked at his hand which she was holding.

“Your hands would be pretty hard to bite into, Grandfather.”

“Mary,” said her mother, “that is impolite.”

Mary grew pink.

“I’m sorry,” she said, but Grandfather laughed.

“You can’t go to sea and keep your hands soft.

Salt water and ropes and the wheel don't go with soft hands."

"But, Grandfather," said Peter, still thinking of the bee, "why didn't you squash him up in your handkerchief and kill him?"

"There's the reason," said Grandfather. They turned into their gate and saw the two apple trees beside the house, pink with blossoms. There certainly were bumblebees all about.

"Perhaps one of them is your bee," said Peter. Mary thought she had never seen anything so lovely.

"Oh, Mother," she said, "couldn't Peter and I stay outdoors till dinner time?"

This was a very bold thing to ask, for on Sundays the children were never allowed to play outdoors. Mother looked very serious. Peter said:

"Oh, Mother, there is only one day in the whole year when the apple trees look like this—do let us!"

His mother looked at the apple trees. "Well, you may, but you must not play any games or run about."

"Oh, thank you!" they said together, and they

went over to the nearest apple tree as fast as they could without running. Grandfather and Mother went into the house.

The children stood under the larger tree. Every now and then the wind would blow a little, and a few petals would float down. They tried to catch them but it was difficult, although they fell slowly.

Suddenly they heard a loud harsh voice—"Hello! Hello!"

They looked at each other, half afraid. Then it came again—"Hello!"

It seemed to be right above them.

"Oh, Peter, who is it?" Mary caught his arm. They ran out from under the tree and looked all around. No one in the street, no one in their yard. All the windows of the house were closed. Then the voice came again—"Ha-ha! Ha-ha!"

"It's a bird!" cried Mary. "Look in the tree! It's a parrot!"

They forgot that it was Sunday, when they could not run or shout, and they did both.

"Oh, Mother, Mother, come—there's a parrot!"

Grandfather came to the door.

"What's all this noise? Your mother says you must come in at once."

"But, Grandfather, it's a real live parrot with a red head and green tail, and it has been talking to us!"

"Goodness me," said Grandfather, "so it is. Here, Polly, pretty Polly!"

The parrot cocked his head on one side and turned his beady eyes toward Grandfather.

"Oh, let's catch him!" cried Peter.

"Perhaps he is making a nest in the tree," said Mary.

Peter looked at her with disgust. "Silly, parrots don't have nests around here. He must have flown from some warm country. Oh, can't we catch him?"

"Well, I think we might," said Grandfather. "I caught a parrot once. I'll get a net." And he went into the house. The children whispered together:

"We'll keep him in a cage and teach him to say all sorts of words——"

"And whistle 'Yankee Doodle'!"

"Where can we get a cage?"

"We could put him in the old hen coop, for now." Peter ran around the corner of the house

and came back dragging the old hen coop. The parrot watched them with his head on one side. When he saw the hen coop he flapped his wings and gave a harsh laugh.

"Oh, he's frightened at the hen coop." So Mary stood in front of it and spread her skirts to hide it from the parrot. Then Grandfather came out of the house with a piece of old fish net and a light pole in his hand.

"Oh, Grandfather, we have the hen coop to put him in, but we're afraid he doesn't like it!"

"Well, we'll have to catch him first," said Grandfather. "I'll climb the tree."

The children opened their eyes wide. Grandfather climbing a tree on Sunday!

"Now, I'm going to tie this piece of bread to the end of the pole, and you must hold it for the parrot to eat so that he won't notice me. Here, Polly, pretty Polly!" and Grandfather carefully raised the bread toward the parrot. The parrot bent his head toward the stick and then edged off walking sideways on the branch away from the bread. Grandfather rested the end of the pole against the branch.

"Here, Polly, pretty Polly!"

They waited. Mary held her breath. Slowly



"Here, Polly, pretty Polly!"

the parrot walked back to the bread and pecked at it. Grandfather smiled.

"Now, children, hold the pole steady, and I'll climb the tree."

It was a good tree for climbing. Peter had climbed it ever since he could play alone, and Mary, even, had been up to the third branch. Grandfather climbed slowly, and the parrot did not look at him. Soon Grandfather was near enough to touch him—he put his hand in his pocket and brought out a piece of corn which he held toward the bird. The bird began to peck that instead of the bread. Then slowly, very slowly, with his other hand, Grandfather raised the net behind the parrot and spread it out on little twigs. Bit by bit, he moved it around until the only place the parrot could escape was in front. Then, quickly, with both hands he brought the edges of the net together, and the parrot was caught.

The bird began to squawk and scold, while Mary jumped up and down and clapped her hands, and Peter ran to the tree to help Grandfather down, for he was having a hard time climbing with the parrot in his hand.

"Look out, he'll bite!" Grandfather lifted up the hen coop and put the parrot in, net and all, then pulled the net out through the slats and draped it over the front.

Mother came to the door. "Why, Father, what are you doing?"

Mary ran and took her hand. "Oh, come, Mother, we've got a live parrot, and we're going to keep it and teach it to say everything."

Mother looked in the hen coop. "Where did you get it?"

"It was up in the tree, and, Mother, you should have seen Grandfather catch it!"

Mother still looked at the parrot. "I think it has escaped from some cage. It looks to me like the parrot that hangs outside José Silvero's shanty on Straight Wharf."

"Why, so it does," said Grandfather; "it must be Silvero's parrot."

"Oh, Grandfather, can't we keep it?" asked Mary.

"Not if it belongs to Silvero," replied Grandfather. "Here, Peter, run down to Straight Wharf and find out."

Mother looked doubtful. She did not like to have him go down to the wharves.

"Do you think he should, Father?"

"Why, certainly, he's a big boy now. Anyway, it will be very quiet there on Sunday. Run along, Peter."

"He doesn't really mean 'run,' " said Mother. "Remember it is Sunday."

So Peter walked out the gate as fast as he could and down to the corner of State Street. He felt very grown-up and important; he hoped that he might meet some of the boys he knew. By good luck, there, right in front of him, was Joseph Bunker. Peter was walking so fast that he caught up to him at once.

"Hello, Joseph!"

"Hello! Where are you going?"

"Down to see José Silvero."

"You are! What for?"

"On an errand."

"My, aren't you scared?"

"No, indeed," said Peter, but his heart was beating fast. José was a Spaniard. He had long black hair and gold earrings. There were many stories about him, but the one all the Nantucket children believed was that José had been a pirate, and was hiding in Nantucket from the Spanish king.

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Joseph continued, "My brother saw his Spanish knife the other day."

"Ho! You mean his fish knife."

"No, I don't—I mean the knife he wears in his belt. My, it was sharp! After he showed it to Ezra, he asked him to come into his shanty, but Ezra wouldn't. He knew too much."

"Pooh! I'm not afraid of José. He has to behave himself here in Nantucket. If he didn't, my grandfather would write a letter to the King of Spain and tell him where José was."

By this time they had reached Straight Wharf. There was no one on the wharf road, but some men were working on the deck of a sloop which was moored near the end. José's shanty was off on one side, next to a warehouse. The door was closed, but there was the empty parrot's cage hanging in front.

"Oh, dear," thought Peter, "it's his parrot," but by this time he was more excited about seeing José than about losing the parrot. He gave a little knock on the door of the shanty. No one answered. Then he tried a louder one. The door opened and José poked out his head. His black hair and moustache were smooth with oil, and his gold earrings glittered. He said some-

thing that sounded like "Good-morning." Peter remembered his manners and took off his hat, saying:

"Good-morning. Have you lost your parrot?"

José did not understand. He opened the door wider and made a motion with his hand, inviting Peter in. The little boy did not know how to refuse, so in he went.

The shanty was dark, after the sunshine, and it smelled of fish.

There was a narrow bed, like a bunk, on one side, and a big sea chest on the other; at the end was a small fireplace. On an upturned barrel were two candles and a colored picture. José motioned Peter to sit on the sea chest. It was so high that his buckled shoes did not touch the floor. José sat on the bed.

Peter was frightened, but he began again:

"Have you lost your parrot?"

José stared at him. Peter pointed to the empty cage that he could see through the crack of the door.

"Pretty Polly, pretty Polly, hello, hello!" He tried to mimic a parrot.

This time José understood. He nodded and pointed to the empty cage.

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"Si, si!"

"It's at our house," said Peter, "come with me and I'll show you." He thought this a good chance of getting out of the shanty, and so slipped down off the chest.

No luck. José made a gesture for him to sit down again, and, as Peter hesitated, took him by the shoulders and lifted him back on the chest. Then he smiled and walked across the room. What was José going to do? Peter's heart began to thump. On the barrel by the fireplace lay a long sharp knife. José picked it up, then turned around and smiled. Peter was too horrified to move. Still smiling, José opened his cupboard and took out half a loaf of bread and a wooden box. He cut two slices off the loaf, then dug into the box with his knife and brought up some red stuff which he spread on both slices. Then he held one out to Peter.

Poor Peter was so astonished and relieved that he could hardly say "Thank you." His throat was so dry that he did not want to put the bread into his mouth, but he took a little bite because he knew it would be rude to leave it. [The red stuff was jelly, a delicious kind that he

had never tasted before. The second bite went better, and Peter managed to get it all down.

Then José smiled and bowed, and motioned him out the door. Peter took a deep breath of the lovely June day. It seemed as if he had been in the shanty an hour.

Mary was standing by the cage in the yard, but as soon as she saw them coming, she ran into the house to get her mother and grandfather. José took off his broad-brimmed hat and bowed very low as they came out.

Grandfather said, "How do you do, José—is this your parrot?"

José looked into the coop—"Si, si!"—and he smiled delightedly. "Loreto, Loreto," he said to the parrot, putting his hand in between the slats. The parrot ruffled up his feathers and gave a sharp peck. José pulled his hand back, bleeding, but he smiled.

"He bite."

Then he tried again. This time he got his hand between the slats. The parrot squawked a little, but did not bite. José opened the front of his coat and folded the parrot inside. Then he again made Grandfather a bow, saying some

words that Peter did not understand. But Grandfather did, for he said, "You've very welcome, José."

So out the gate went José and the parrot. Peter and Mary must have looked sad, for their mother said, "Do not feel badly, children. José needs the parrot more than you do. It is the only thing he has to remind him of home, and his only friend in a strange land."

The children looked sadly down the street after José and his bird. They did not notice a sailor who was coming toward the gate until he stopped and pulled his forelock.

"Does Cap'n Macy's wife live here?"

"Yes, she does."

"I have a letter for her from her husband. Captain Coffin brought it in the *Endymion*."

The children both shouted, "Oh, Mother, Mother!" and Mrs. Macy quickly turned back from the door.

"What is the matter?"

The sailor held out a folded piece of paper sealed with orange wafers. It was creased and dingy, but as welcome a sight as any in the world.

"It's a letter for you from your husband,

ma'am. Captain Coffin brought it. His ship is just in."

"Thank you kindly," said Mrs. Macy, looking very happy. "Are you from the *Endymion*?"

"No, ma'am," replied the sailor. "But I hope the letter brings you good news."

"Oh, Mother, read it—do read it!" cried Mary, jumping up and down.

"Not out here, Mary," replied her mother.

They all went into the house, but Mrs. Macy did not open the letter until she was seated in her rocking chair. The children and Grandfather stood in front of her waiting.

First she read her letter to herself, and she smiled happily as she looked up at Grandfather.

"Read it to the children, Father; it is good news."

This is the letter that Grandfather read aloud:

MRS. MACY:

AT SEA, *February 19, 1822.*

I have the pleasure to inform you that I am in health after a recent attack of fever and hope these lines will find you and the family in health also. My crew are all brave and well. I have got 900 barrels of oil, cheaply Sperm and shall stay here to the southward of the latitude of 20 for the next few months.

With esteem, I conclude,
YOUR HUSBAND.

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"Mary!" said Peter, "that was written way back in February! Don't you believe they have a lot more oil by now, Grandfather?"

"Yes, I do," replied Grandfather. "If they keep on doing well, they ought to be home before another year is out."



CHAPTER VII

THE WHALE SHIP

WELL, Mary," said Grandfather the next afternoon, "I am going down street to do some errands and maybe row out to the *Endymion*; would you and Peter like to come?"

"I don't know where Peter is, Grandfather; I saw him go out of the gate with Samuel and Peleg; but I should like to go very much."

"Then we will go without him."

Mary took her grandfather's hand, delighted at the prospect of spending the afternoon with him. She loved to go into the shops and see the bolts of cloth with their charming patterns, and to go out in a rowboat was a great treat.

"First, we will go to Aaron Perry's," said Grandfather. "I hope he has some of Lorillard's best Macaboy snuff—he was out of it last week—— Hullo! there's Peter!"

Peter, Samuel, and Peleg had burst from the door of Aaron's shop; Peter had the end of Aaron's parcel string in his hand and was making it run out as fast as he could. Sam and Peleg were shouting:

"Wet line, Aaron, wet line!"

"Peter Macy, come here!" called Grandfather.

The boys looked around; Peter dropped the string, and Sam and Peleg took to their heels.

"Peter, you must not tease Aaron; come into the shop with me and say you are sorry."

"What were you doing, Peter?" whispered Mary.

"I was a whale, running away with the line, and when a whale does that, the line runs out so fast that they have to pour water on it to keep it from charring the boat."

Grandfather overheard this.

"I hope this whale has good manners," he remarked.

Peter, shamefaced, made his apology.

Aaron was never cross; he smiled at Peter.

"Captain Howland, thee should take these children out on the harbor to look at the *Endymion*; she is just in."

"Yes, she brought us news of the *Empress*, and we are all on our way down there—that is, if Peter can behave himself."

"Yes, sir, I can!"

So, after Grandfather had purchased his snuff, they walked down to the wharves. Grandfather had a friend, Captain Zeb Tyler, who kept a little skiff off his boat house near Old North Wharf. The door of the little house was open, and Captain Zeb was just inside, sitting in a red rocking chair, and looking out over the harbor.

"Well, well, well!" he shouted, as he saw Grandfather and the children. "This is mighty fine! What shall we do, now that you've come down to pay me a visit? Will you have a peek through my spyglass, or look at my sea shells, or perhaps you'd rather go for a row?"

"We thought we would like to have a look at the *Endymion*, if you would be kind enough to lend us your skiff for half an hour," said Grandfather. "I hear she is still anchored in the harbor."

"Sure enough—and I'll come along, too," answered Captain Zeb, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe and stowed it away in his pocket.

"All aboard, now," he cried, as he helped the

children down the steep steps from the shanty to the skiff. "All aboard the *Starfish* now, and sit still."

Captain Zeb let go the painter, stepped to his place at the oars, and in two minutes they were clear of the wharves. There, in the middle of the harbor lay the whale ship they had come to see. Her hull was gray and bare of paint; the salt spray had whitened her spars and rigging.

"She doesn't look very clean," Mary remarked, "the *Empress* was much prettier than that."

Grandfather smiled:

"You don't remember the *Empress* when she got home two years ago, do you, Mary? No vessel that has been to sea for three years looks spick and span."

Soon they could read her name, *Endymion* and "Nantucket" in white letters across her stern. Not a soul could be seen on her decks, but a thin line of smoke rising from the galley showed that the cook was aboard. The ship's side towered above them like a high wall; the children had to crane their necks to see the tops of the tall masts as Captain Zeb rowed slowly along beside her.



The ship's side towered above them

Suddenly a head with a red nightcap poked up along the rail and looked down at them: it was Zach Winter, the cook. He took his pipe from his mouth and hailed them.

"*Starfish* ahoy! Cap'n Howland there? Did you get a letter from Cap'n Macy?"

"Yes, indeed. Much obliged," called back Captain Howland. "Where did you meet up with the *Empress*?"

"Sighted her four months ago off Madagascar, heading up into the Indian Ocean. Cap'n Macy and some of the crew came on board to gam. Lord! It seemed good to see 'em and hear tell of Nantucket."

"How was their luck, Zach?" asked Captain Howland, "pretty good?"

"Well, I wouldn't say 'twas, and I wouldn't say 'twasn't. They hadn't met up with any schools o' whales, but they'd run across some big old lone bulls—couple o' them were one hundred-barrelers."

"All hands were well?"

"They looked to be in good health," answered Zach, "and fine spirits. There hadn't been a bit o' sickness on board since Cap'n Macy got cured of his fever, 'cept the first mate—you re-

member Ebenezer Sartwell?—he come down with measles a few days after they sailed. However, he picked up all right, and all hands was as fit as a fiddle.”

“Peter,” whispered Mary, “ask him if Father had got a parrot or a monkey for us.”

So Peter plucked up his courage to call out:

“Please, Mr. Winters, did my father have any parrots or monkeys on board?”

“Maybe a few human ones, but nary a genuine parrot or monkey did I see or hear tell of,” answered the good-natured cook. “He won’t likely turn his attention that way till he’s got all the oil his ship can hold and he heads for home.”

At this moment something on board the ship caught Zach’s attention; he sniffed the air two or three times, and then, with a muttered, “Stew’s burning!” vanished as quickly as he had appeared.

“What did he mean about human parrots and monkeys, Grandfather?” asked Peter as they rowed away.

“He probably meant that there were some very talkative and nonsensical members of the crew who were always chattering and playing pranks,” was the reply.

"Oh," said Peter, "I see."

As they rowed slowly around the ship, Peter looked up at her scarred and weather-worn sides and asked :

"Was the first ship you went whaling in anything like the *Endymion*?"

"Very much the same," answered the Captain, "very much like her indeed, except the old *Sunbeam* was a better ship and a handsomer than any they build nowadays. When she came sailing in here to fit out for her first voyage, I tell you I never saw a finer sight in *my* life! I signed up the very next day, and I sailed in her every voyage she made for twenty years. A finer ship than the *Sunbeam* never sailed from any port after whales, and that I'm sure of!"

"Was it a finer ship than the *Empress*?" asked Mary, for she was sure that her father's ship was the best that ever sailed.

"Well, Mary, she wasn't nearly so big and handsome, but there ain't many ships that could earn more for her owners."

"Was it comfortable on board, Captain Zeb?" asked Mary.

"Well, now, I don't know as I ever heard of a whaler being called comfortable. They don't

build 'em for comfort, but for going after whales, and I never see the ship yet that could beat her at that."

"Won't you tell us what happened the first time you killed a whale?" asked Peter. "How long was it before you saw one?"

"Oh, about four weeks," answered the Captain.

"Goodness, what did you do all that time?—Just sit around?"

"Great sakes, no, child! Why, we were as busy as so many bees: fixing lines, sharpening harpoons, fitting out the boats, bending on their sails—enough to do for all hands, and to spare. O' course, all this time the man up in the crow's-nest was watching out for whales. See that crow's-nest up on the mainmast?" inquired the Captain, pointing to the *Endymion*.

"That little place with a hoop around the mast, way up?" asked Mary.

"Yes, that. Well, that's the crow's-nest, where the lookout man stays, on watch for whales. And when he sees a whale's spout, he calls out, 'Thar she blows!' or when he sees the whale jump clear out of water, 'Thar she breaches!'

"One fine morning, we were slipping along with a following breeze, when all of a sudden we heard the lookout:

" 'Thar she blows!' he cries—'thar she blows! thar she blows *and* breaches!'

"Such a shouting and scampering you never heard. The ship hove to, and the Cap'n ordered three boats lowered. I'd been told off to go in Jim Hardy's boat, so I was over the side an' in my place before you could say 'knife!' Jim Hardy was the harpooner, and a mighty fine one he was—I believe he had as many whales to his credit as any man out of Nantucket. Then there was Benjamin Hobbs who stood in the stern with a long oar, steering, and four more of us to row, or bail or manage the sail and be useful all around. Our whale was a little way from the ship—great big feller he was—headed away from us, an' no more thinking of any harm than you are this minute. Jim stood up in the bow with his harpoon all ready.

"Well, there lay the whale, real quiet, and there was we creeping up behind him, when up went Jim's arm, and whiz! went the harpoon with the line hissing through the air, and sunk its iron point about a foot into the whale's flank.

With a terrible jumping and splashing and churning of the water, away he went, with the line humming out of the tubs and all hands unshipping the mast and bailing for dear life."

"Was the whale running away with you, Captain Zeb?" asked Peter.

"Cert'nly, child. We were a-skimming over the water at a great rate, leaping from wave to wave, getting farther from the ship every second. All of a sudden, up went his flukes and down went the whale!—down, down, seemed's if he meant to go right to the bottom of the ocean, and take us with him. But there was plenty of line, so he couldn't take us that trip, and there we sat, rocking on the waves, while we all had a pipe and waited."

"What were you waiting for, Captain Zeb?" asked Mary.

"Why, for the whale o' course, child, the whale. He can't stay down under water all day—he's got to come up and breathe, same as you and I.

"Well, right about that time, I begin to feel pretty well scared. All right's long as you can see what you're after, but sitting there in that open boat, wondering where that old devil

would come up, I got so twitchy I could have 'most twitched myself overboard. Jest as I was turning to see where the ship was, there came a terrible commotion: the whale breached clear out of water a few fathoms off our bows, and then made for us head on.

"'Starn all!' yelled Jim, and every man backed water with all his strength. There was a great boiling and hissing of foam as the whale shot by, and jest time to turn bows on to him, when back he comes at us again, lashing up the water with his flukes. This time he sheers off two oars on the starboard side of the boat, gets Jim's lance in him, and goes wild.

"'There now, boys,' yells Jim, 'he's in his flurry—jest keep clear and we'll be all right.'

"Well, old Humpy was laying 'round him with his flukes like he was going to whip up the whole ocean, twisting and turning something terrible, when he give one extr'y twist, and down come his great flukes like a giant's shovel, right across our bows. It smashed the boat to kindling, and down we went, crew and all, in a reg'lar mess of wreckage—lines, tubs, arms, and legs. The last thing I saw was the whale spouting blood, and when I come up, he was lying on

his side—fin out, as we say—dead as a marlin spike.”

“Did all the other men come up, too?” Peter’s eyes were wide with excitement.

“Every one of ’em,” answered Captain Zeb.

“Goodness gra-cious!” Peter drew a long breath, “and what happened then? Did you swim back to the ship?”

“Sakes alive, no! We couldn’t even see the ship. The waves were running a little higher, and we’d just about made up our minds that the only thing to do was to climb aboard old Mr. Whale, when we heard voices, and pretty soon the sound of oars, and along come another boat to pick us up. Well, we climbed aboard pretty stiff and cold, and after Jim Hardy had cut a hole in the whale’s flukes and run a line through it to tow by, we started back to the ship. It seemed a long way to me, and I was turrible tired when I got aboard at last, and mighty glad of the hot rum that was served out to all hands by the Captain’s orders.”

“I suppose then you had your supper and went to bed?” said Mary.

“Not a bit of it,” answered the Captain, “no such thing. We had a snack of hot supper, to

be sure, and then all hands had to turn to, to cut in the big whale."

"Cut what?" asked Mary, greatly astonished.

"Cut in the whale, silly," answered Peter; "don't you know what that means? It's the way they cut off the blubber, to get the oil out of it."

"Now, Peter," said Grandfather, "that's all very true, but don't interrupt Captain Zeb too much if you want him to go on."

"Well, how do they get the blubber off?" Mary persisted.

"My land, what a hand you are to ask questions! You let me light my pipe and I'll tell you all about it. What between rowing and talking, I'm pretty well winded."

"Yes," said Grandfather, "suppose you and Mary look around a little, Peter, and let Cap'n Zeb get his breath."

The boat drifted with the tide, while the children leaned over the sides and watched the little red crabs scuttling about on the white sandy bottom.

"Well, now," said Captain Zeb, "I guess I've about recovered, and if we fetch out 'round the *Endymion* again and back, we'll have just about time to cut in that whale. Seems to me, when

we left him, he was made fast to the ship by the chain through his flukes. Well, before we could start in on him, we had to pass a line around the smallest part of his back, near his tail, and another through a hole in his jaw. When the *Sunbeam* rolled to windward, all the lines and tackle creaked and strained as if the whale was going to pull the masts out of her, and when she rolled to leeward—smack! she and the whale knocked together with a bang that made her timbers tremble. All this plunging and rolling didn't make things any easier for Jim Hardy, who stood out on a wobbly little staging, rigged of planks, over the vessel's side, above the whale. Now it would go slop down on the whale's back, with the seas pouring over it, and now it would go jerking up in the air, fit to throw a man up into the rigging; all he had to hold on by was a miserable little line run along for a hand-rail, and every time the staking dipped, he had to make a jab with his cutting spade, in jest the right place to cut off the whale's head. That's the first part of the job, and I guess you'll be pretty surprised to hear that with all the lurching and rolling and seas washing over, Jim had the head off that whale in twenty minutes.

“Next job was to cut off the blubber. You see, Mary, the whale’s blubber is a fine thick overcoat of fat that he is rolled up in, and all of it is full of oil that you can get by cooking the fat in a great big iron pot, called the try-works. The men cut the blubber off in big strips, called blanket pieces, and then the strips were hove inboard by the windlass and dropped into the hold. There was a nice oily place for you! Four of the crew worked like beavers cutting up the blanket pieces into horse pieces that are small enough to go into the big kettles of the try-works. Every time the ship rolled, down fell these poor fellers on to the blubber running with oil, and in less than no time they were soaked from head to foot.

“Everything was going full blast by this time: three—four men on the cutting-stage, cutting the big strips of blubber, and the sharks snapping all ’round them for a little snack o’ whale; men at the windlass turning for dear life to haul up the big blanket pieces—the windlass squeaking like all possessed; the men in the hold cutting the blubber and rolling ’round; the rest of us tending the fires under the great pots of the try-works, and throwing in horse pieces to be tried

out. The decks were running with oil, and everybody was soaked in it.

"By and by, the blanket piece was hove in-board, and the carcass of the whale was let go. It floated aft in a regular smother of sharks, each one hungrier than the last.

"All hands were pretty well tuckered out by now, but there was nothing for it but to keep on and finish up the head, for the wind was rising, and it would be dark before long. If a gale got up in the night, the whale's head might part the cable and go to the bottom with the best part of the oil. So we all turned to again, hard's we knew how, to finish off the head.

"The cutting-stage was so slippery with oil, and the seas running so much higher, that it was a mighty hard thing to stand out there at all, let alone do anything else. Jim Hardy came on board to rest and had a canikin of rum, while the Captain took his place. Now, you know, in the head of a sperm whale is a regular tank, called the case, full of the very sweetest and purest oil; the Captain had to open this up with his spade, and then bail it out with a bucket. He cut off great chunks of the white, spongy inside part of the head, dripping with oil, and pretty

soon got at the case, which was as deep as a well, right in the middle of the whale's head. How'd you like to stand on a greasy plank, holding on to a little rope, with the ship rolling one way and the whale's head rolling the other, and a little bucket in your hand to dip up oil, and a few sharks thrown in to make it lively?"

"Oh," said Mary, "it must be terrible! Does Father have to do that?"

"Maybe he does, but don't worry, Mary, he knows how to take care of himself."

Peter grinned. "I'd like to try it!"

"Well, now, I can jest tell you it ain't much fun," answered Captain Zeb, "and I wager Cap'n Brooks was all ready to come in, by the time the windlass had hauled up the last bucketful of oil.

"Another bit o' sport that's not all it's cracked up to be is handling the big oil casks when they're full. Each one is as high as a man's chest, and what with an oily deck and a rolling ship, even with four men trying to manage it, a cask'll go crashing into the bulwarks. If you slip, one of those casks'll smash you flat as a pancake, and that's a fact. So you see, what between the whale, and the sea, and the sharks

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and the casks, whaling ain't jest the safest pastime in the world."

"Weren't you *very* tired by that time, Captain Zeb?" asked Mary.

"We cert'nly were, child, but we had to stow away every cask of oil in the hold before we turned in."

"That was good work, Zeb," said Grandfather; "you got that oil below on the stroke of four bells—and that means, children, that it's six o'clock, and we shall be late for supper unless we start for home this minute."

Just then, the skiff swung gently against the steep wooden steps which led up to Captain Zeb's little shanty. As they climbed up to the dock, Mary cried, "We've had a *lovely* afternoon, Captain Zeb! When may we come again?"

"Hush, Mary," put in her grandfather, "the Captain has other things to do than to row you around the harbor and tell about whales."

"Nothing I'd like to do better, Mary," said Captain Zeb. "You make your grandfather bring you down next Saturday morning, and we'll go and watch the men at work on the ships over on Brant Point."

"That will be splendid," said Peter, "and after we've looked at the ships, will you tell us what happened the second time you killed a whale?"

"Sakes alive, Peter Macy, what a one you are after whales! But I'll tell you one thing, and that is, your mother won't let you come again unless you get back to supper. Cut along, now, and get your clam chowder while it's hot!"

Peter and Mary hurried off with Grandfather, looking back to wave at Captain Zeb, who stood in the door of his shanty, smoking, until they turned the corner.

At the foot of State Street, Grandfather stopped short and clapped his hand to his pocket!

"I declare, I've left my packet of snuff at Cap'n Zeb's shanty. Peter, run back and get it—Mary and I will walk ahead."

Peter obediently ran back to the wharf, glad of a chance to get down on the water front again. There was Cap'n Zeb standing in the door of his cabin with the package of snuff in his hand.

"I thought you'd be back after this pretty quick. Catch!"

Peter caught the package neatly and leaned up against the shanty while he got his breath.

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Cap'n Zeb stood in the doorway puffing his pipe.

"Well," he remarked, after a short silence, "she's a fine ship, the *Endymion*. If I was a young lad, I'd soon be shipping aboard her, or one like her."

"How young do you mean, Cap'n Zeb?"

"Oh, 'leven or twelve. It's a fine life for a hearty young 'un—good sight better than too much book larnin'. I don't hold with that—no, sir. The sea's as good a school as any to be found. Look at the masters of the ships that sail from Nantucket. 'Most every one o' them shipped as cabin boy when he wa'n't no bigger'n you. They're men, they are, not human beings keepin' stools warm in the counting houses!"

Hereupon Captain Zeb snorted loudly and knocked out the ashes of his pipe on the door frame.

"I wish you'd tell me more about when you were a cabin boy," said Peter.

"Any time, any time at all, my lad," replied Cap'n Zeb, patting Peter's shoulder kindly with his great brown hand. "But you run along now with that snuff, else your chowder'll be cold as a stone."



CHAPTER VIII

STOWAWAY

THE next week, Peter accepted Captain Zeb's invitation and found him at home. He had not told his mother where he was going, for she had not yet given him permission to go down to the wharves alone. Of course, Captain Zeb's shanty was between high and low water mark, at the very beginning of the wharf, and Peter could reach it without walking on the wharf, but he knew that his mother would think there were as many rough sailors there as on the dock itself, and that there was really no difference between the shanty and the dock.

Captain Zeb was very glad to see him, gave him an apple, and asked him to sit down on the

bench beside him. It was a bright summer morning and a crowd of boys were in swimming off the next dock.

"Well, young man, have you decided how soon you're going to sea?"

Peter's cheeks grew pink. He felt as if Captain Zeb were looking right into his mind.

"I don't know—as soon as my father'll let me."

"How old are you?"

"I'm almost eleven."

"Well, well, I was a cabin boy when I was ten; and then I lived on the sea for sixty years. Ten's none too young to start in. You sleep for'ard with the crew, but you don't do no work on deck—jest set the table in the cabin for the Captain and the officers and make the beds and brush up and help the cook; when there's dull times the sailors'll larn you the ropes and knots and how to sew."

Peter's eyes were wide with interest.

"My, you must have learned a lot!"

"Would you like to have me show you how to splice and make knots?"

"Would you, Cap'n Zeb?"

"Sartin'. Give us that bit o' line there—we'll

start right in. Can ye tie a square knot or a bowlin'?"

"Yes, but that's all."

"I should have thought your grandfather would have taught you the knots."

"He's taught me about vegetables and how to harness Gibraltar." (Peter did not say that his mother had never encouraged his learning anything about ships.)

After this, Peter went to see Cap'n Zeb about once a week. But he did not say anything about it to his family.

In September, school began again. Captain Macy had been gone two years, and Peter had forgotten that he was to study hard. His mind ran on whales and whaling voyages, and he did very little work. When the boys had to fill their slates with neat copies of a proverb for an exercise in writing, Peter would cover his with ships and whales; a few minutes before the teacher came to look at his work, he would rub the pictures out and hastily scratch down a few sentences.

A new boy had appeared at school—Will Treat. He had red hair and as great an en-

thusiasm for the sea as Peter. He was a year older than Peter and thought school a dreadfully dull place. He confided his trouble to Peter.

"My father won't let me stop school and go to sea; last summer he said that if I wanted to work I'd better start in and show if I was good for anything. I went to work for that old Quaker Eli Robinson and he said, 'William, if thee prove faithful, I'll give thee four dollars this month, and if thee prove very faithful, I'll give thee five dollars the next month,' and I worked hard for him every day but Sunday and the Fourth of July, and got nine dollars, and what happened then? Here I am back in school!"

Will's distaste of school made Peter think worse of it than if he had been alone. Every morning when he got up he would hurry to his little window to see if any whaler had reached port. After school, they would go down on the docks either to Captain Zeb's or to the shop of a master rigger whom Will knew.

Then, in January, for two weeks, Will did not appear at school. None of the other children knew where he was and, as Peter had never been to his house in the north end of town, he

felt shy about going there now. But one Saturday morning Peter found out about him.

It happened that his mother was out of molasses. "Take the jug, run down street, and get it filled for me. Come directly back, for I am going to make gingerbread."

When Peter reached the shop he found a sailor buying tobacco. He was a thick-set, dark man with bushy eyebrows. Another sailor entered the shop behind Peter—a younger, pleasanter looking man than the first. From their greeting, Peter decided they were shipmates, and he listened with great interest to their conversation, for their vessel was to sail in a day or two.

"Well, Joey, what do ye make o' this day?" inquired the older one.

"I think it's a weather breeder, and almighty cold."

"Think we'll get away to-morrow?"

"Looks so now, if the weather's fine."

The shopkeeper broke in:

"You fittin' out at Edgartown? Better not go 'thout ballast 'less it's a fair day."

"No, we've fittid out here. The Cap'n did think of goin' over there this time, the bar's

shoalin' up so, but he don't like to go over in the winter time without ballast, jest as you said."

"Is that red-headed boy going with us?" asked the older sailor.

"No, he's down sick, and it's hard luck on him!"

"Was it his first v'yage?" asked the inquisitive shopkeeper.

"Yes, and I never seed a boy so crazy to go to sea. His pa wouldn't let him, and went to every cap'n in town to make 'em promise not to take him, but he forgot Cap'n Perry. The boy played hooky from school and worked 'longside the *Two Sisters* copperin' her for a week, and Cap'n Perry liked him and signed him up. Then the boy went home to supper and told his folks, and they give in. Now he's down sick and we've got no boy."

"The mate says the Cap'n'll get a boy all right."

"I hope he will. Last time we went without a boy I got fair sick of the sight of a mop. 'Tain't right."

"Oh, boys ain't scarce."

Peter stared and listened as they talked. So that was where Will Treat had been for the last

two weeks. And now Captain Perry was short a boy!

The older sailor took his bundle and left the shop. The shopkeeper took Peter's molasses jug out to the shed and left Peter alone with the younger man. Peter was going to ask him more about the vacant place for a boy on the *Two Sisters*, but he did not know how to begin. At last he got up his courage enough to say:

"Are you on the *Two Sisters*?"

"Surely."

"Are you going on a long voyage?"

"Depends on the whales. I been on that ship three voyages. I signed up when she sailed out of New Bedford eight years ago. I ain't a Nantucket man."

At that point, the shopkeeper came back with the jug filled, and Peter had to pick it up and go out. But he did not go straight home; he wanted to have a closer view of the *Two Sisters* than he could get from the window. So he turned into Federal Street and soon arrived at the harbor front.

The *Two Sisters* lay not far off shore, spick and span with her fresh black paint and white

trimmings. The sea was an intense blue, the surface of the water was motionless. Peter thought he had never seen a finer sight. Oh, if he could only ship on her as cabin boy, and go to sea, and visit foreign parts, and watch the men kill whales!

He sighed deeply. Then he noticed the ice piled on the shore and the ice cakes floating in the water. His hand holding the jug was growing numb with cold; he wished that he had worn his red mittens; there was nothing to do but go home.

He started back at a jog trot to warm himself. There was ice on the sidewalks and, as he turned into Federal Street, he slid and bumped up against a man who was coming 'round the corner in the opposite direction. Down went the man, Peter, and the jug.

"Fend off!" cried the man as he picked himself up, "keep your eyes open! Why, you're the boy that was in the store. Here, pick up your jug."

The jug had rolled into the gutter; the stopper had popped out, and molasses was spreading itself over the cobblestones.

Peter scrambled to his feet and set the jug up-

right; the sailor got the cork and, as he was pushing it in, he said:

"Where do you live?"

"Orange Street, sir." (Peter was glad it was the younger, pleasanter sailor.)

"This ain't the way to Orange Street."

"No. I've been down to the shore to look at the *Two Sisters*."

"Well, do you like the look of her?"

"Yes, sir. I think she is a beautiful vessel." As Peter spoke his courage rose. "I wish Captain Perry would let me sign on as cabin boy."

"You're not very big, and what'd your family say to that?"

"My father's a captain. He's away on the *Empress*."

"Oh-ho, is he? But the rest of your folks—what'd they say?"

"I guess they wouldn't let me," answered Peter truthfully.

"Well, then, I'd be in a peck o' trouble if I got the Cap'n to take you, and then they wouldn't let you go."

"They wouldn't find out, and by the time I got back I'd be older, and then I'd be going anyway, and they wouldn't mind. Oh, please do ask

him! I want to go more than anything in the world! I have to go to a stupid school, and I'm not learning anything."

"Well, now, that's hard lines," agreed the sailor, "but I can't take ye to the Cap'n less'n your folks agrees, much as I'd like to have a smart boy aboard."

Peter must have looked fearfully disappointed, for the soft-hearted sailor added, "If I was a young chap and wanted to go to sea, I'd jest go."

"But how?" cried Peter.

"Wall, now, jest before the ship sailed, I'd get out to the ship some way or other after dark—it gets dark now 'round half-past four ye know—and then I'd go below and stow away in among the empty casks; I'd take something to eat, and next day, when I feel she's under way, I'd go up on deck, and there I'd be."

"Do you think I could do that?"

"Oh, I'm not talkin' 'bout you. I mean a boy o' spirit that was sot on goin'."

"How would the boy get aboard?" asked Peter, feeling the sailor's reluctance to give him direct advice.

"Well, to-day, f'r instance—we're probably

goin' to sail to-morrow—we're going out to the *Two Sisters* 'bout half-past five, and our whale-boat's drawn up on the shore side o' the Old North Wharf. They'll be a lot o' stuff in the bow and a boy could hide under it easy enough and when they got out to the boat why he'd watch his chance and climb aboard and then he'd go below in the hold for the night."

"My!" said Peter following the sailor's directions in his mind, "and are you going to sail to-morrow?"

"Cap'n expects to; we've been tied up to the wharf here for days puttin' in supplies. Now, we're going out 'round three bells but I'm not advisin' any young feller to hide hisself on a ship; and if any one should find him there, he couldn't say as how I told him to, could he?"

"Oh, no!" Peter understood that the sailor did not want to be blamed if the boy should be caught. "The boy ought not to say you advised him to run away to sea—he wouldn't, I'm sure."

"I'm glad you think so. Now, cut away home, young 'un—give us your flipper. Perhaps we'll meet again some day, who knows."

Peter could hardly eat his midday dinner for excitement. His mother had scolded him for

taking so long to get the molasses, and she frowned at him when she saw that he had left food on his plate.

"Peter, you may go to your room as soon as you have finished bringing in the wood, and stay there the rest of the day; you are either ill or disobedient, and I do not think you are ill."

Peter was almost glad to be sent upstairs. He was bursting with the plan he had formed. As soon as he had made six trips to the wood shed, he hurried upstairs. He took off his shoes, lay down on his bed, and pulled up the patchwork quilt; then he went over his plans. As soon as it was dark, he could climb out on the shed roof, drop to the ground, run down to the shore, hide in the whale boat of the *Two Sisters*, and then, ho! for the high seas!

He fell asleep, and, as daylight was going, he was awakened by a knock at the door.

"Peter," came his grandfather's voice, "here is a bowl of bread and milk for you. Your mother says you must stay upstairs."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" said Peter, as Grandfather entered.

"It's going to be very cold to-night. You'd

better go to bed now and don't open your window."

"Yes, Grandfather."

Peter ate the bread and milk gratefully, but as soon as Grandfather had gone, he hopped off the bed. Instead of undressing, he put on more clothes—two pairs of wool socks, an extra undershirt, a knitted jacket, and a muffler besides his heavy coat. He rolled up his clean shirt and put it in his pocket, then he went to his door and listened.

He could hear voices in the kitchen, his mother and Mary, and then Grandfather. So he closed his door and opened the window carefully. It was a small window, and Peter could barely squeeze through the lower part; the upper part which was larger would not open. He had a hard time keeping the window from slamming down on his fingers, but he could reach the wooden gutter and brace himself, and, closing the window gently, he let himself down on the shed roof. From there, the ground was easily reached.

It was almost dark, cold, and still. A big red moon was rising in the east. Peter had for-

gotten there would be a moon, but there were very few people about on such a cold evening. He went down the little path that led down the bank to the lower street, then he hurried to the Old North Wharf. He met only two men, and they did not pay any attention to him.

When he got to the beach, there was no whale-boat. Cap'n Zeb's shanty was tightly locked. The *Two Sisters* lay out in the harbor, her spars black against the moonlight, and her riding light in the rigging. Peter waited in the shadow of the shanty. He hardly felt the cold, he was so excited.

The town clock struck six, and four bells rang out faintly from the vessel, echoed by the smaller craft in the harbor.

Peter's heart began to misgive him. Perhaps they had gone out already—perhaps they had landed on the dock. He dared not go to see. What should he do? He looked very carefully along the beach but saw only cakes of ice. Captain Zeb's little skiff the *Starfish* was pulled up in the eel grass. Could he go out in that? The wind was blowing from the northwest lightly, the tide was rising; if he rowed out to the *Two Sisters* and then let the skiff go, it would drift

back on this shore. Peter did not reason that it might be crushed in the ice on the shore, for he was not trying to think of anything that might hinder him. He went over to the *Starfish* and found that he could move her. What about oars? Cap'n Zeb always locked his in the shanty. Cap'n Zeb might leave his boat on the shore, for his name was painted clearly on her, but he never left the oars.

Peter tugged and pushed the skiff till it was at the water's edge, then at his feet he saw a broken oar; the blade was whole. Peter resolved not to turn back until he had tried everything, so he got carefully into the boat, and, using the oar as a paddle, he found that he could move ahead slowly among the ice cakes. It would have been impossible, if the wind had not been so light, but in five minutes he found himself in the dark shadows of the *Two Sisters*.

What was the best thing to do then? He pushed his way along her great black side and reached the bow; there he found the two taut anchor chains and smaller chains that ran out to the bowsprit. There were also pieces of wood that jutted out from the hull on each side of the bow. Peter took hold of a chain and stood up

in the skiff; he felt sure he could climb up. The noise of the ice grating against the vessel would hide any sound he might make. He put his foot up on the chains and reached above him. It was a hard pull, and when he looked below and saw the *Starfish* drifting away, he felt very shaky. But soon he was as high as the deck, on a level with the twin figureheads which were gazing coldly out to sea. He scrambled over the rail as quietly as he could and hid behind the windlass. A man walked along the deck toward the bow; it must be the watchman; had he seen him paddling out from shore?

Evidently not, for he turned and tramped aft. Peter was at last on a whale ship, but he did not have much time to look about him. He knew that he could not stay on deck in the cold, but how to get below in the hold was a mystery. There was a companionway behind the windlass, but the doors were closed, and he dared not open them. The watchman came forward again and turned aft and Peter started to crawl along the deck in the shadow of the bulwarks. He passed the foremast and mainmast. There was a large cask at the foot of the mizzenmast, and Peter crouched behind it as the watchman started on

his way back. The man passed him, and Peter ventured even farther astern. He came to the skylight over the cabin and peeped down. There was a swinging lantern burning dimly, but no one was in sight. He crept 'round the end of the skylight on his hands and knees, and found that he had reached the great lashed tiller. On the other side of the skylight opposite it were two doors, the one nearer him was open a dark crack, but the farther had a bright light streaming out, and Peter caught sight of a stove and knew it was the galley.

The watchman was again making his way aft. Peter knew he must find a hiding place or crawl 'round the skylight whenever the man came to the stern. He darted across to the door next to the galley and whisked in; the watchman passed, and he was safe for the moment.

But he was terrified when he heard the watchman turn and come back toward his hiding place. Perhaps he had been seen! The watchman's hand was on the door latch—then the door closed and the steps went away.

Peter was so frightened that he was shaking. Had the watchman discovered him, and was he going to keep him prisoner until the Captain

came aboard? Minutes went by and nothing happened. Peter began to feel about him.

The little room was a large closet, filled with bags and boxes, evidently supplies for the cook, for there was a pleasant smell of coffee. The closet was so full that Peter could move about very little. The wall next to the galley was delightfully warm, and Peter sat down on a box and cuddled close to the heat. He pulled two empty sacks over him and waited.

The watchman struck five bells—half-past six. The night looked very long as it stretched ahead of Peter. There were no sounds but the watchman's footsteps and a dull bumping, which Peter soon realized came from pieces of ice drifting against the boat.

After a while, he slept. When he woke up, he was cold and stiff. He could not tell whether day had come. Then he heard someone moving on the other side of the galley partition and he knew that it was probably morning and the cook was getting breakfast. Peter wondered how soon they would get under way. Had the Captain and the crew come aboard yet? It must be a very cold day. His feet felt numb in spite of his thick stockings and the sacking. He felt

very hungry. When would they discover him? If the ship would only start soon, he could go out. But he heard nothing except the noises made by the cook; even the bumping sound had stopped.

Someone came to the galley door and spoke to the cook. Peter could hear them indistinctly. They were talking about the Captain. This is what he caught:

“ . . . the Captain . . . ”

“ . . . come aboard.”

“ . . . greatest nonsense that we didn’t get away yesterday.”

“He could have told by the glass.”

“I know a vessel that was held here for two weeks, all ready to sail, just like us; froze in tight. They tried to saw her out . . . ”
The rest of the sentence was lost.

“We’ll be here a week or more ’less a good southwester comes up.”

“ ’Tain’t likely in January. The first mate’ll be pleased, he’ll have a longer honeymoon.”

“Think the Cap’n’ll come out over the ice?”

“What’s there to come for? Here we are and here we’ll stay.”

Peter felt like bursting into tears when he

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realized that the harbor had frozen over during the night and the *Two Sisters* was caught fast in the ice. What should he do?

This was soon settled for him by someone opening the door of his hiding place. A swarthy man with a black beard stood outlined against the light.

"Who's here! Who dropped you in here?" He seized Peter by the shoulder. Peter's right leg was so stiff that he fell against the wall as he tried to stand up.

"Please, sir, I'd like to sail with you on this ship. I'd like to be the cabin boy."

Peter told the story of how he had come out in the *Starfish*. The sailor roared. The cook who had stood by grinning while they were talking now spoke. His English was very broken.

"The Captain he get hisself cabin boy all right day before to-day."

"Oh, he's got a boy, has he?" said the dark man. "Well, sonny, you'd better be cutting along home."

Peter must have looked very miserable and woebegone, for he added:

"The cook'll give you a piece o' bread and a mug of coffee, won't you, Tom?"

"Right-ho!" said the cook, and he motioned Peter to come into the galley, where a mug of hot sweetened liquid and a piece of dry bread were offered him. As he munched, trying to keep back the tears, the bearded man said:

"Well, do your folks know you're here?"

"No," said Peter.

"You'd better run home as fast as you can. You can get ashore on that ice. Jest walk on the cakes that are froze in, don't step on the new ice, and go over to the shore where it's shallow. You'll likely break through there, but you'll only get your feet wet. Go careful, for the ice ain't thick yet. We'd be histin' sail if there was a good breeze, and we might break out o' the harbor even now."

Peter understood that there was nothing to stay for.

"I guess I'll go now."

"Well, sonny, I'll give ye a start. Here's a good stout line. Let me tie it 'round you and I'll pull ye in if the ice breaks when ye try it."

The sailor tied the line 'round him under his arms with a good firm knot; Peter thanked the cook for his food and followed the sailor to the bow.

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"Now, climb down the way ye came up; step on the old ice first, and slide across the new places."

Peter did as he was told. The old ice bore him well.

"Now slide across that bit o' new," called the sailor. "I'll yank ye up if it breaks!"

Peter slid, and it did not even crack. As the sailor paid out the line, he tried the next thin place. Although it was not thick, the ice was strong and still freezing, and it held. He stopped and took off his mittens so that he could untie the knot; the sailor pulled in the line and waved him a cheery good-bye.

He went on carefully, but when he was almost ashore, the ice broke as the sailor had predicted, and he leaped to the beach with wet boots.

The town clock struck seven. Oh, dear! It was breakfast time, and they would know that he had gone. As he turned into Orange Street, he saw a familiar figure in front of him, Uncle Samuel Chase.

"Hello! Peter!" he cried. "What are you doing up so early this cold day?" He didn't wait for an answer. "I was just going up to your

mother's to get her. Your Aunt Betsy's given her ankle an awful wrench and can't set foot to the ground; I've got to be off all day, and that black Rowley's down sick with whatever it is she gets when the mercury drops as low as this ——" He broke off. "Why, boy, your boots are all ice!"

"Yes, I got wet."

"It's no day for that. Run right in." They were at the gate. Peter held it open for Uncle Samuel and followed him up the path. At the door of the house he was as close behind him as his shadow—Uncle Samuel's friendly presence was his hope.

"Good-morning," called Uncle Samuel. Peter said nothing. "Peter and I just came up the street together. We're in a peck o' trouble at our house," and without waiting for Peter to answer his mother, who had exclaimed, "Peter, where have you been!" he recounted his troubles.

"Dear me," sympathized Mrs. Macy. "Of course, I'll go right back with you. Peter, you should not have gone out before breakfast without asking permission. Sit right down to your porridge. Let me get my cape, Sam'l. Father

will be back in a moment and take care of everything here."

With a few hurried directions to Judith, she went out in the hall, put on her heavy blue cloak, and went out the front door with Uncle Samuel.

Peter sat down to his porridge. He could hardly believe that they did not know he had been away all night. The kitchen was sunny, the fire crackled; it was good to be at home. He ate his corn mush thankfully.

"I'm glad I got back early," he said to himself. "I wonder what happened to that sailor who told me how to run away to sea."



CHAPTER IX

'SCONSET

THE months passed by and no more news of Captain Macy came to his family.

One warm day in April, when Mary was playing in the Chases' yard, she found a daffodil. She ran into the house with it.

"Oh, Aunt Betsy, here's a daffy—the first one! I picked it for you."

"Well, well," said her Aunt Betsy, "thank you, Mary—though I'm sorry to see it." But she took the flower with a smile.

"Why are you sorry?"

"Because that means your Uncle Sam'l will be

wanting to go to 'Sconset for the fishing, and I'll have to go along."

"But don't you like 'Sconset, Aunt Betsy?"

"I like it, oh, yes—but I've got so much spring cleaning ahead of me here that I hate to leave."

"I should think 'Sconset would be lovely," said Mary wistfully.

"Why, Mary, haven't you ever been there?"

"I drove there once with Grandfather, but we didn't get out."

"Well, when I take the children to 'Sconset next summer, you must go, too."

That night, Mary told her mother what Aunt Betsy had said. She was afraid her mother might think she was too young to go, for she had never spent a night away from home. But while Mother did not promise, she smiled at Mary's excitement and said, "Summer's a long way off—we'll see." And that was so hopeful, from Mother, that all the spring Mary planned her 'Sconset visit.

Siasconset was a little village of fishermen's cottages, seven miles from Nantucket Town, on a bluff that looked over the ocean "straight to Spain and Portugal." The Nantucketers went there in the spring and fall for the codfishing,

and often in the summer for vacations. They lived in the tiny houses and felt that they were at the real seashore, away from the city.

Nothing more was said about the visit, until one evening in July, at supper, when Mother began:

"Well, children, would you like to go to 'Sconset to-morrow with Aunt Betsy for two days?"

"Hurrah!" cried Peter, "Mary, too?"

"Yes, Mary, too." Mary said nothing, but her eyes were shining.

Peter was glad Mary could go, but he began to wonder where they all would sleep, so he said:

"But, Mother, that is going to make ever so many children: there's Sam and Peleg and Obed and Louisa and Maria"—they were all Chases—"and then Deborah Taber from New Bedford is visiting them, and us two make—" he counted on his fingers—"eight! And there are only three beds for all of us children!"

"I told your Aunt Betsy that, but she said she could fit you all in. She is going to put the four little girls in one bed—two at the top, and two at the bottom."

Mary's eyes grew round, "Oh, Mother, shall I be one of them?"

"I think you will. You'll not be able to say you're lonely at night, will you?" smiled her mother.

At quarter of ten the next morning, Peter and Mary sat on their doorstep in the sunshine, waiting for Aunt Betsy. Peter had a little brown satchel in his hand which held their night clothes. When the church clock struck ten, Mary began to be uneasy.

"Do you suppose Aunt Betsy has forgotten us?"

"Oh, no, she's always late," Peter assured her. "She has to go up and down State Street first, asking if she can take parcels to 'Sconset for any one."

Just then the chaise came in sight. Aunt Betsy was driving, and the three little girls were on the seat beside her. Following the chaise was a Nantucket cart. Samuel was driving, seated in a wooden chair; Peleg and Obed were standing behind him. Peter and Mary ran out into the street, and their mother followed. Aunt Betsy waved her whip.

"Good-morning! All aboard!"

Mother helped Mary into the chaise, beside Aunt Betsy; Maria moved to a cricket on the floor; Peter climbed into the cart.

"Now, be good children," said Mother. "Oh, Betsy, one thing I forgot. Will the children be able to have their Saturday-night bath?"

"Bless us!" said Aunt Betsy. "I never thought of that! But don't worry—I'll give 'em a good scalding!"

Mother gave Mary a kiss, Aunt Betsy cracked her whip, and they were off—but very slowly, for Aunt Betsy never urged Kitty, her fat black horse.

They went down Orange Street. Peter jumped out to open the gate that was meant to keep the sheep out of town; then they took the 'Sconset road over the Commons. The dome of the church and the masts of vessels in the harbor disappeared behind the little hills. They passed the place where the largest mayflowers grew in the spring. On their right, beyond the Commons, they had glimpses of the wide blue ocean.

Aunt Betsy had told Sam to keep the cart behind the chaise, but less than halfway to 'Sconset, the Chase boys began to get impatient with their mother's slow driving.

"Let's get ahead!" said Peleg, who was always up to mischief.

"But Aunt Betsy told us to keep behind," Peter objected. He had been brought up to mind his elders better than his cousins had been.

"I don't care—come on, Sam!" and Peleg took one rein and slapped it on Ginger's back. Sam grinned and began slapping with both reins. They had reached a place where the cart could turn into a side rut. Still slapping the reins and clucking, Sam drew abreast of the chaise.

"Boys!" called Aunt Betsy, "don't get that horse too hot!"

Sam did not answer. Peleg began to stamp his feet on the bottom of the cart and the other boys took it up. That excited Ginger—he was used to being driven slowly and quietly by Samuel's father—and he started forward on his own account. Aunt Betsy shook her head at them; she could not make herself heard above the din.

All at once, while the boys were laughing and pounding with their feet, they realized that Ginger was running away. Sam changed his methods; he stood up, pulled at the reins and called, "Whoa!" The other boys and the little girls in the chaise cried, "Whoa!" but Ginger paid

no attention. The cart bounced from side to side in the rut, and Sam tumbled down in the bottom. Peter and Obed clung to the rope at the sides of the cart, but there came a very large bounce, out they both tumbled, and Ginger galloped away.

In a moment, Aunt Betsy drew up beside them.

"Are you hurt, boys?"

Peter and Obed picked themselves up and walked slowly over to the chaise. They were not hurt, but they were afraid of a scolding. However, Aunt Betsy saved that for Sam and Peleg.

"Well, then, you'll have to walk to 'Sconset, unless Sam waits for you. I'll take your bag, Peter. We'll save you some dinner."

She clucked to Kitty, who was pulling grass at the edge of the rut, not at all excited at the runaway, and drove away. The boys looked at each other: they were not halfway. A four-mile walk lay before them.

"Well, I suppose we'd better start," sighed Peter.

"I wonder what'll happen to Sam?" asked Obed as they trudged along.

That cheered Peter. "He'll catch it when he gets to Uncle Sam'l. My! I didn't know Ginger could go so fast!"

"I don't believe he ever did before," said Obed.

At the top of the first rise they looked eagerly for the cart, but Ginger had gone over the horizon, and they saw only the chaise.

"He can't run all the way to 'Sconset, can he?" asked Obed.

"I don't know. I don't see how Sam and Peleg stayed in."

They went on. The day was warm and they grew thirsty, but there was nothing to drink. They looked for blueberries, but there were none by the roadside.

Two more hills, and at last 'Sconset was in sight. Even then it was half an hour more before they walked through Main Street. On each side were low gray cottages. Smoke was rising from the Chases' chimney, and there, in the side yard, was Samuel, splitting kindling.

"Hello, Sam!" they shouted.

He looked up. "Well, you two! Why didn't you hold on?"

"Why didn't you stop the horse?"

"Oh, I didn't want to." Sam spoke rather grandly.

"What did your mother say?" Obed asked.

Sam did not answer.

"Where's Peleg?" Peter inquired.

"He's over at the well getting water. Mother doesn't like the rain water in the water barrel."

Louisa came to the door.

"Oh, Peter, Mother says you and Obed are to come in."

The boys went through the low door of the little house. The girls were seated around the table—Aunt Betsy at the head. In front of her was a steaming bowl of fish chowder. The fire was snapping in the big fireplace, and although the sun was shining, it did not make the room too warm.

"Sit down, boys," said Aunt Betsy, "we've only just begun. Sam and Peleg are to have their dinner afterward."

The chowder tasted wonderfully good to the hungry little boys. There was a great plate of bread and butter and a dish of doughnuts. Aunt Betsy never brought a maid to 'Sconset, but had her black cook, Rowley, fill a basket with

enough good things to last out the visit. The little girls thought it a great joke about Sam and Peleg, and nudged each other and giggled.

As Mary ate her chowder, she kept looking about. She had never been in a house with such low ceilings or such little windows. There was a tiny stairway, and off the main room were two bedrooms, each just large enough for a bed, a washstand, and a chair. The house door had two portholes, like a ship. On the mantelpiece were three candles in pewter candlesticks, and two large pink shells.

When dinner was over, Aunt Betsy said, "Call Sam and Peleg now. Louisa and Maria, you can be washing the dishes and brushing up. I am going to have forty winks. You can all go and play on the beach this afternoon. I want Peleg to get the milk for supper from the farm."

She took the iron kettle off the crane and carried it to the back room, pouring out the hot water ready for dish washing. Then she went into her bedroom and shut the door.

Mary and Deborah helped Louisa and Maria, and the dishes were soon up in the rack, clean and bright. Peter raked over the fire, as his grandfather had taught him, so there should be

coals to start it up for supper. Then all the children started for the beach.

The cottage was only a few steps from the edge of the bluff. The surf ran right up to the edge of the bank, at full tide. The whaleboats that were used for fishing were drawn up into a gully, out of reach of the waves. That day there was a strip of dry beach, and the children scrambled down to it. They were delighted with the waves, for around Nantucket Town the ocean was comparatively still.

The timbers of a wrecked vessel lay just out of water, and the children ran to it at once. The girls started to play house underneath, but the boys climbed on top and began to talk of the high seas.

"She was a big one, wasn't she?" remarked Peter, as he climbed to the top.

"Not very," said Sam, "she wouldn't look very big out there." He pointed out beyond the surf to the blue horizon.

"Was she wrecked here?" asked Obed.

"Never heard of her," said Sam. "I guess this piece just drifted in. She'll be covered up some day. Father says this beach is making out."

"Well, Sam, you'll be on a wreck this time next year, maybe," said Peleg, cheerfully.

"Why?" asked Peter.

"Didn't you know Sam was going to sea next March?"

"Are you, Sam?"

Sam tried to look modest. "I'm going with Uncle Benjamin in the *Sea Lion*. I'll be fourteen then."

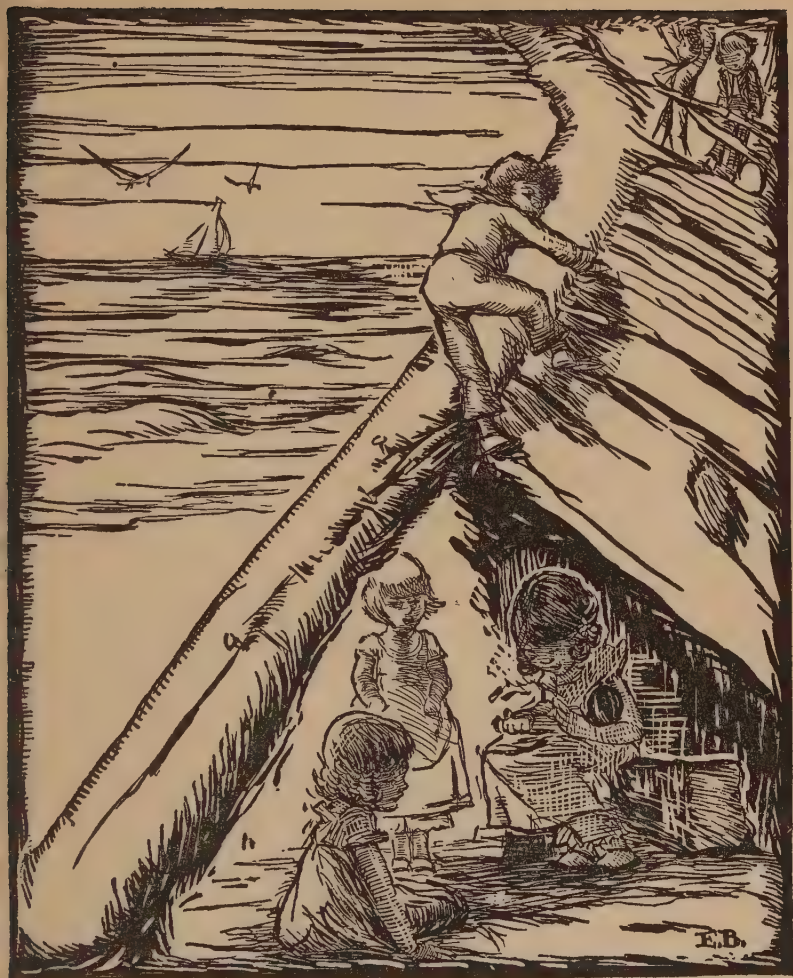
"You'll be glad to go with your Uncle Benjamin, won't you?" asked Peter.

"No, indeed," said Sam. "When he took young Ben on his first voyage—eighteen months—he never spoke to him the whole time, except to swear at him. I'd rather go with a captain I don't know, but I don't care—I'm tired of staying at home."

"My!" said Peter, "I'd like to go! But I'm afraid Father won't let me for a long while."

"Oh, I forgot." Sam turned to Peter. "My father said to tell you that the *Empress*—your father's on the *Empress*?—was spoken off Charleston bearing north, last month. He just heard."

"I wonder what that means?" Peter pondered. "Was she coming home?"



The girls started to play house underneath

"As far as I know," said Sam. "When did they sail?"

"They'll have been gone three years in September. Mother has only had word once, and then the *Empress* was off Madagascar, and they had had good luck."

Just then a long wave washed up the beach and ran under the wreck where the little girls were sitting. They screamed and fled.

"My! Some people are afraid of the water!" said Peleg scornfully.

"Well," remarked Louisa, "we wouldn't be afraid if we were up there where you are!"

"Ho!" cried Peleg, "I'm not afraid, anyhow!" and he jumped off the wreck and ran down the wet sand to the very edge of the receding water. As the next wave rolled in, he dashed back, and then, after it broke, he followed it down the beach as he had done before.

Suddenly a wave much larger than the others rose in front of him as he was at the lowest point of the beach. Peleg saw it and turned to escape, but he stumbled, and the wave was on him. It rolled him over and over, and before he got his footing, another one caught him. Then the third wave came, it was smaller and this time he

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managed to stagger up the beach through the back-wash.

As soon as the little girls saw that Peleg was not going to be drowned they began to laugh at him.

"Who got caught!"

"Old slow-poke!"

"Now, who's afraid of the water?"

"What'll Mother say?"

"You'll have to go to bed for a while, Mr. Peleg!" cried Louisa.

"No, I won't!" said Peleg. "You come up in the gulley with me, Sam, and I'll fix it."

In a few minutes they came back; Sam with no shirt on under his coat, and Peleg in Sam's shirt and underdrawers. The little girls laughed more than ever, but Peleg did not mind, and wringing out his wet clothes, he hung them up on the wreck.

"They won't be dry for hours," said Louisa, "and we must be back by five. You'll catch it, Peleg!"

They stayed on the beach until a cold breath of fog came over the water, and Sam and Louisa said it was time to go back. He and Peleg waited to change back their clothes and caught

up with the others at the town pump. Peleg certainly looked damp. He began to make his plans at once.

"Look, Peter, you go in the back door and bring me out the pail, and I'll go down to the farm and get the milk."

Peter found Aunt Betsy blowing the hot coals to start the fire.

"Well, children, did you have a pleasant afternoon? You're back just in time. There's going to be cornmeal mush and milk and brown sugar and bread and jam for supper. Has Peleg gone for the milk?"

Yes, Peleg had gone, fortunately for him. The children tidied themselves for supper—the boys washing their hands in a basin behind the house, which they filled from the rain-water barrel. By the time Peleg got back the fog had come in so thick it was like a gray curtain outside each window. Peleg's hair and eyebrows were covered with drops of moisture. He handed the milk to his mother.

"Here's the milk."

"Thank you, Peleg." All would have been well if Peleg had then kept quiet, but he felt so pleased with himself that he had to talk.

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"It's dreadful thick fog: I almost lost my way."

"The fog is always thicker here than in town," Samuel informed him.

"'Deed it is. My, I got dripping wet."

"Come over here by the fire, Peleg, you'll soon dry off," said his mother.

Peleg walked over to the fireplace.

"Stand here," she pointed to the chimney corner.

Peleg edged up to the fire, for he was chilly. Preparations for supper went busily on. Suddenly Aunt Betsy sniffed. "What's this smell of wet clothes?"

"It's Peleg!" cried the little girls in chorus.

His mother turned to him, "For goodness sakes, Peleg, you're steaming like a tea-kettle! However did you get so wet!"

Little streams of water were running down Peleg's ankles on to the hearth, and steam was rising from his clothes. She felt his jacket.

"Why, Peleg, you're positively sticky! What happened to you?"

She took off his jacket and felt it inside. "Fog wouldn't go through that jacket. Have you been in the ocean?"

"Yes'm." Peleg was very subdued.

"Then go right upstairs and get into bed. Go up with him, Sam'l, and bring his clothes down to me. I wish I had not brought such a bad boy with me."

Peleg's clothes were hung on a chair before the fire, and they all sat down to supper. They had the candles lighted on the table. It was cozy in the little room, and Peter and Mary enjoyed having supper with so many children. Nothing more was heard from Peleg. Aunt Betsy remarked, "He'll get warm in the feather bed."

Soon after the supper things were cleared away, the boys were sent upstairs to bed. Aunt Betsy made ready to give the girls their weekly baths in front of the open fire.

"I can't do all you children at once, so I'll do the boys to-morrow night. Your mother wouldn't mind, would she, Mary, if you had your bath on Friday instead of Saturday?"

Aunt Betsy brought in the washtub and put it in front of the fire. She had the little girls pour in cold water to mix with the boiling water from the kettle, until the bath was just the right temperature. Then a towel was spread on the floor

and each little girl in turn got a scrubbing with strong brown soap. Then they dried themselves and put on clean nightgowns, and Aunt Betsy seated them in a row in front of the fire, "drying up."

They sat there, growing deliciously warm. "I feel just like a piece of toast!" exclaimed Louisa. "Can't we go to bed?"

As she said this, there came a loud bumping and scratching outside, on the shingles. The children stared at each other with wide eyes—not so Aunt Betsy. She threw up the little window:

"Boys! what are you doing?"

No answer except more scraping on the roof. Aunt Betsy hurried outdoors.

"What is it?" whispered Mary.

"I know," said Louisa. "It's the boys! They got out the scuttle and slid down the roof, but they can't get back."

"But I heard a noise on the roof?"

"Perhaps they did get back—here's Mother!"

Aunt Betsy hurried in from outdoors and darted upstairs. The girls heard voices, then Aunt Betsy reappeared.

"Go to bed, girls," she opened the bedroom

door. "Pop in before you get cold—Louisa and Maria at the top, and Mary and Deborah at the foot."

In they popped, and at that moment the bumping and scraping noise was heard again. Out the door went Aunt Betsy again, they could hear her going by their window. Then came a slam.

"What's that?" whispered Mary.

"The scuttle. Peleg must have got in before she caught him. He'll be in bed by the time she gets upstairs."

But Aunt Betsy did not go upstairs. When she came in, she sat down in a rocking chair and pulled out her knitting. Mary could see her through the crack of the door. What would happen to Peleg? But the feather bed was so comfortable and warm that Mary fell asleep before she found out.



CHAPTER X

FATHER COMES HOME

THE next morning, the girls awoke to find the fog gone and the sun shining. They jumped out of bed and began to dress. In a few minutes they saw Peleg go past their window on his way to get the milk.

"Do you suppose Mother will keep him at home all day?" Maria asked Louisa.

They discussed this as they dressed; Louisa thought it probable.

"Maybe she'll keep all the boys in—it sounded as if there were more than Peleg on the roof."

"Oh, dear!" lamented Mary, "if Peter is naughty, I know Mother won't ever let us come again!"

Breakfast was quiet. The boys were sub-

dued, the little girls did not even giggle, and Aunt Betsy looked cross. Mary sighed. Why couldn't the boys be good? Yesterday had been such fun, and now no one was happy.

Half through breakfast, they heard a horse and cart coming toward the house and stopping at the gate. Samuel was sitting opposite the open door.

"Why, it's Peter's grandfather!" he exclaimed.

Aunt Betsy went quickly to the door.

"Good-morning, Mr. Howland! Won't you come in and have breakfast? What brings you to 'Sconset so early in the morning?"

Captain Howland was hitching Gibraltar to the fence post; he turned toward Aunt Betsy and took off his hat.

"Good-morning, ma'am. Thank you, I've had breakfast. I have come for the children—there is good news for them."

"What is it?"

"The best of news—the *Empress* anchored off the bar last evening and their father will be at home to-day. Well, Mary, haven't you got a kiss for me?"

Mary ran to Grandfather and gave him a

heartly kiss. All the children were smiling, for they liked Captain Howland, and they knew it was a happy day for Peter and Mary.

"Well, that is splendid!" cried Aunt Betsy. "Run up and pack your bag, Peter—your father will be in a hurry to see you, I know."

In a few minutes, they were ready. Aunt Betsy bundled them into the cart, and with many kisses and shouted good-byes, they were off. Grandfather was as happy as Peter and Mary. He slapped the reins on Gibraltar's back very hard when the old horse went too slowly.

"Get up, Gibraltar, you're going home!" Grandfather urged him on.

"I don't believe he knows that the *Empress* is in," remarked Mary.

"And he wouldn't care if he did," complained Peter. "Grandfather, did Father have a good voyage?"

"I don't know," replied Grandfather, "your father hadn't got home when I left, but he had less than a three years' voyage, so it was probably a good one. You see, the first thing I knew about it at all was Ebenezer Barrett running up the street; as he went by he called to me 'The

Empress is off the bar!" So your mother and I went up on the walk, and there she lay, sure enough. And I went right off and got Gibraltar, and here we are!"

At last they rattled up Orange Street and stopped at their gate. Although the house looked just the same, the children felt that they had been away for weeks.

"Now, run right in," said Grandfather. "It isn't every day that little boys and girls have their father home from a long voyage."

"Oh," cried Mary, "do you think Father's in the house *now*?"

"Run in and see."

They climbed over the wheel of the cart and raced up the path. The house door was open, and the first thing they saw was their father's blue jacket hanging on a peg in the hall.

"He's here!" shouted Peter, and he pushed open the kitchen door and ran in. Mary followed him, but slowly.

"Well, Peter!"—Captain Macy caught his big boy up in his arms—"and Mary! Aren't you going to kiss me?" for Mary hung back shyly. Years are long between the ages of five and seven, and Mary had forgotten how big and

brown her father was, and what a deep voice he had.

Captain Macy sat down in the armchair and pulled her on to his knee.

"My, what a big girl you've grown to be!"

Although Mary couldn't find her tongue, Peter was full of questions.

"How long have you been at home?"

"We anchored off the bar last night, and I got ashore about an hour ago. I've got to be back at half-past ten, for the men are hard at work."

"Did you kill many whales?"

"Enough," smiled his father, "yes, we had a good voyage, and I've brought home a curious present for you children."

Peter smiled with pleasure, but he knew it would not be polite to ask what the present was, so he continued his questions about the voyage.

"Did you go to the Pacific?" He wanted to show his father that he had been studying geography while he was away.

"Yes, we had our best luck on the Japan grounds."

"What ports did you make?"

"Pernambuco, and a few in the Pacific. I wish you could see the islands there, Peter—not like Nantucket—some have beautiful green mountains rising right out of the sea, and others shine with every color of the rainbow."

"And did you see wild beasts and savages?"

"We saw the natives," said Father, "and, Peter, do you remember those packages of needles that you bought for me at Eliza Riddell's?"

Peter nodded.

"What do you think happened to them? I traded them for a whole boatload of fine ripe fruit and vegetables."

"Just those little needles?"

"Yes," said Captain Macy, "just those little needles. It was in the South Pacific, and we had anchored in the lee of a little island covered with palms; the natives on shore beckoned us in a friendly manner to land, which we did and found them very civil. I sent for the chief and showed him the needles and made him understand in sign language what we wanted. He pointed to a whaleboat and I nodded. So they filled it to the gunwales with pineapples and limes and bananas and all those tropical fruits

and vegetables that we don't see here in New England—and all in exchange for the needles. And I can tell you that the chief was delighted with his part of the bargain.”

“My!” said Peter. “I wish I could have seen it! Do they taste good?”

“They were delicious,” said his father. “I wish I could have brought some home, but they spoil quickly. Never mind, I have brought you some cocoanuts and tamarinds.”

“What else was there?” asked Mary, a little less shy by now.

“You would have liked to see the fishes there, Mary—all colors, swimming about in the beautiful clear water.”

“And were there wild beasts?” Peter asked again.

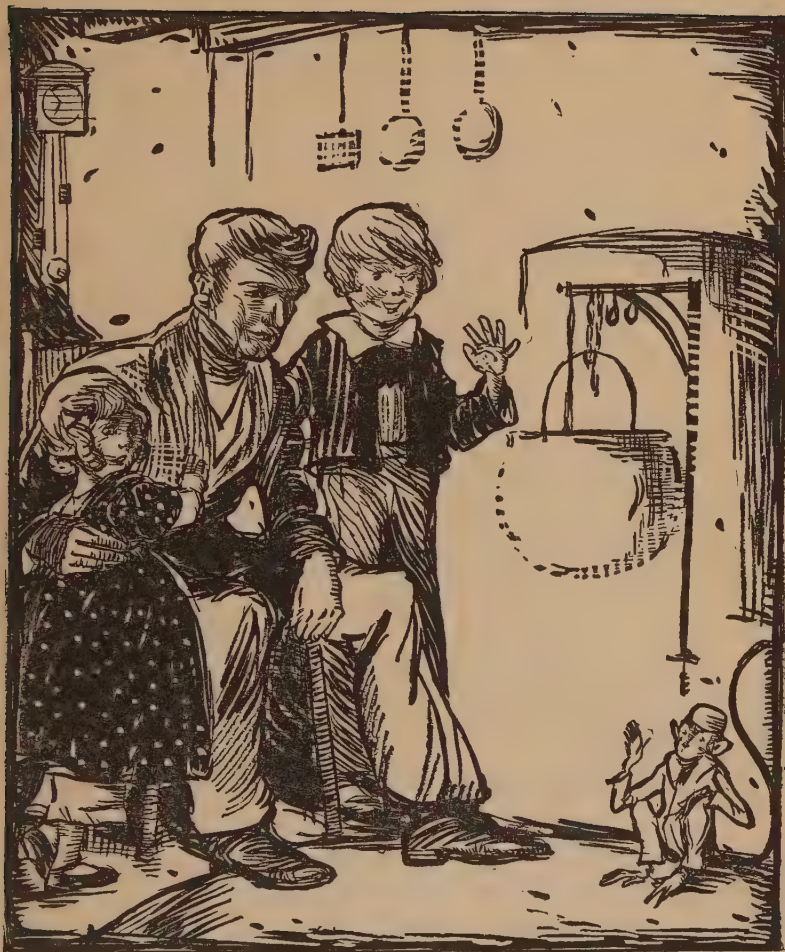
“Some beasts, but not all wild.”

As he spoke, Peter felt a sharp pinch on the calf of his leg.

“Ow!” he cried and he turned 'round quickly. There stood a little creature dressed in a tiny blue sailor coat and a red hat, grinning at him like a little old man.

“Oh, it's a monkey!” cried Peter.

His father laughed.



"Oh, it's a monkey!" cried Peter

"That's the present I brought to you and Mary. Come here, Jocko!" and he snapped his fingers at the little animal.

Jocko did not obey, but ran to the window, hopped on the window sill, then scrambled up the window shutter and from there jumped to the top of the open door.

Mother had been silent till now, smiling at the scene, but at this she came forward.

"Children, you will have to keep that creature tied up; I know he is mischievous and untidy."

As if to prove this, Jocko took a peanut out of his tiny pocket and cracked it; down on the floor fell the shells.

"You see," said Mother, "Jonathan, you will have to catch him."

So Captain Macy walked to the door and held out his hand.

"Here, Jocko," but Jocko chattered and kept out of reach.

"Where did you get him?" asked Peter.

"In Brazil."

"And did he wear those clothes?" asked Mary.

"No," laughed her father, "he didn't wear any clothes except his hair; but when the ship got into colder weather, he felt the change so much

and was so miserable that old Dan'l made him that coat and hat."

At this moment Jocko began to scratch the paint of the door. Mother rose from her chair.

"I shall have to catch him myself, if you can't." She seized the big brass warming pan and lifted it up beside the monkey.

"Come, monkey," she said, hoping he would climb on to it.

But Jocko knew better. He clung to the ledge over the door with one hand, swung out into the hall, and then leaped on to the painted fire buckets that hung from the ceiling; they were cone-shaped, and Jocko cuddled down into one of them, his little bright eyes peering out over the top.

"Now I can catch him," said Mrs. Macy. She carried a kitchen stool into the hall so that she could reach the buckets, but again Jocko was too quick. As soon as Mrs. Macy put her foot on the stool, he sprang from the bucket to the hat rack and, as he jumped, he snatched Mrs. Macy's white cap from her head. She screamed and clapped both hands to her hair, but before any one could move, Jocko leaped to the floor and darted out the door.

They all chased him, Mother still holding the warming pan. At this moment Grandfather, who had been putting up Gibraltar, arrived at the front gate.

"Bless my soul!" He stared at them. "What's all this?"

"Stop him, Grandfather—stop him!" cried the children.

Grandfather hurried in the gate and ran toward the monkey. Jocko saw that there was a new danger and turned back—skipped across the grass to the corner of the house and began to climb a gutter pipe. Even with the cap under his arm, he was too quick for his pursuers, and he reached the low roof and then the ridgepole in safety.

"Oh, isn't he darling!" exclaimed Mary. "I wish he'd come down."

"I wish he would," agreed her mother, but she added, "the little wretch!"

"I'm sure Grandfather can catch him," offered Peter. "Don't you remember how well you caught the parrot, Grandfather?"

"Well, I'm not used to catching monkeys, but all of us together ought to be able to outwit the little feller," said Grandfather. "Jonathan, if

you go up to the walk and climb along the ridge-pole, you'll have him, or we'll be here to catch him if he comes down this way. He won't be frightened of you. Haven't you some sugar or a nut that he would like?"

Captain Macy pulled out his heavy gold watch:

"I've got to be back at the wharf in fifteen minutes, so we shall have to be quick. I am afraid your cap is ruined, my dear," he turned to his wife.

"Oh, I can make another cap, but I don't like to see a monkey sitting on the ridgepole of our house."

They stood looking up at Jocko, and in a minute, Captain Macy appeared on the walk. He stepped over the railing to the ridgepole, and sitting astride it, cautiously made his way toward the monkey. As he got near the little creature, he held out a peanut.

"Here, Jocko—here's a peanut—you'd like a peanut—here, Jocko."

Jocko chattered in reply, and made no move; but just as Captain Macy got within arm's reach, jumped aside and ran down to the edge of the roof.

"Come, Jocko, come," called the children from below, as they gazed up at him. But Jocko decided to stay aloft: he ran along the edge of the shingles until he was opposite the walk, then hopped back up the roof, climbed over the railing, and made himself at home on the platform.

"Now we can get him!" shouted Peter.

"Stay where you are, Jonathan—don't frighten him! I'll be up on the walk in a jiffy," and Grandfather disappeared into the house.

The monkey hopped about the walk, then climbed up the side of the big chimney and settled himself on a corner of the brick, the highest place on the house. He faced Captain Macy and had his back toward the scuttle. The captain turned 'round on the ridgepole, but made no move toward the monkey.

"Look," whispered Mary, "there's Grandfather!"

Grandfather's head and shoulders slowly came into sight. He was crouching behind the chimney, and Jocko was apparently unmindful of the danger. In Grandfather's hand was Mrs. Macy's little gray shawl.

"He's going to throw it over him and then he'll have him!" Peter could hardly stand still.

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The shawl went right over Jocko but something went wrong.

"I've lost him!" shouted Grandfather. "He's fallen down the chimney!"

Grandfather ran to the scuttle, and the children went pell-mell into the house.

"Where is he?" sobbed Mary. "Poor Jocko, he'll get burned up!"

They heard Grandfather on the upper stairs.

"It's the flue to my room!" he shouted.

The children turned to the right and pushed open Grandfather's door, and in the fireplace was Jocko, a sad little monkey covered with soot, his red hat over one ear. Luckily for him, there was no fire in the fireplace.

"Oh, Jocko, are you hurt?" asked Mary.

Peter picked him up and cuddled him in his arms. "Oh, feel his heart beat!"

In came the grown people.

"Well, you've got him," said Captain Macy. "He's too scared to move. Now, take good care of him and don't let him get away again."

"Indeed, we won't," Mrs. Macy assured him.

"I've got to go down to the wharves," Captain Macy went on, "but I'll be back as soon as I can."

He was away all the rest of the day and returned just in time to sit down to a delicious supper; the tumblers from Bremen and the pink luster cups had been placed on the table by Mary, to do honor to the fine pair of ducks sent over early in the afternoon by Uncle Samuel. Mother had turned out her best molds of beach-plum jelly, and Grandfather opened for Captain Macy one of the bottles of Madeira which Peter had found as buried treasure. The good things disappeared in no time, and when Mother had helped Judith clear the table, she whisked Mary off to bed. Peter sat down on a cricket in front of the fire, near the armchair which Captain Macy drew up to the blaze.

"You're getting to be a big boy, Peter," said his father, "sitting up so late."

"He sits up now until I have bedded Gibraltar down for the night," said Grandfather; "that gives him a chance to finish his lessons when school is in session."

"We won't bother about lessons to-night," said Captain Macy, after Grandfather had gone out, "but I hope you have been attending to your studies as well as I could wish, Peter."

"I have worked hard, Father, but our lessons

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are so stupid: writing the same thing over and over, and long sums and Latin verbs—oh, Father, when will you let me go to sea?”

Captain Macy looked into the fire in silence for what seemed to Peter a very long time.

“Why are you so anxious to go to sea, Peter?”

“Oh, I know I should like it, and I could do the work, too, because Cap’n Zeb has told me everything that a cabin boy has to do, and he’s taught me how to make knots and to splice; and then, you see, I know what a whaler is like because—because I’ve been on board the *Two Sisters*.”

“The *Two Sisters*! And what took you there?”

“I tried to stowaway.”

“You tried to—— Peter, do I hear you aright? You ran away from home and stowed away on a whaling vessel?”

“Yes, Father—and I thought you would rather I’d tell you right out. I was afraid you might not come back for years, and I should never get away to sea. I knew it was wrong, but I did it just the same. Now, you can punish me in any way you think best.”

Peter’s voice trembled a little, for he knew his

father could be very stern. There was another long silence, at the end of which a sound remarkably like a chuckle was smothered in Captain Macy's beard.

"We need not talk about punishment the first night I am at home."

He reached out for Peter's hand, and drew the boy toward him.

"What prevented you from going to sea after you were aboard?" he asked.

"The harbor froze, sir!"

Captain Macy burst into a hearty laugh.

"The harbor froze, eh! Froze up tight all 'round the ship so Peter Macy couldn't run away to sea! Why, that doesn't happen in a score of years. But, Peter," he added more seriously, "that would have been very bad for your mother and grandfather. They would have been very much worried, and would not have known where you were gone."

"Anyone in Nantucket would know where a boy of spirit had gone."

Captain Macy roared with laughter.

"So you're a boy of spirit, are you? Well, I suppose I should be thankful for that. Now, suppose I go so far as to say this: You will

study under Parson Lovejoy for the rest of the year; he can teach you some navigation, as well as your Latin and mathematics; then, if all goes well, I see no reason now why you should not go to sea next year."

Peter had never expected that his father would be willing to make any such plan. For a few moments, he could not speak from excitement.

"Father," he gasped out, "I'll do my very best—indeed I will!"

"I'm sure of it, my boy," replied Captain Macy, "and now you must run up to bed, because to-morrow I shall let you come down to the docks with me. If you are to go to sea, you must learn all you can both of the cabin and the forecastle!"

THE END



